THE DRIFT OF THE DAY

BURRIS JENKINS

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THE DRIFT OF THE DAY

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The Bracegirdle
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The Man In The Street And Religion
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THE DRIFT OF THE DAY

By Burris Jenkins

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As Viewed by the Author

In these chapters, I have tried to put into colloquial language, easily to be understood by the man in the street, what has been said, no doubt, by many professors and theologians, and much better and more learnedly said, but not perhaps so simply and plainly. It is an attempt to put into words what one man, who believes himself a sample of his age, in America, thinks on certain religious topics, as a sort of index to the drift of popular opinion. Consequently, I do not hesitate often to say, " I think," or " I believe," or to use the perpendicular pronoun with great freedom. I believe, whether I am right or not, that this is the part of modesty; for I claim only to be a thermometer of the popular thought of this time; and thermometers are nothing if not perpendicular.

I am a minister of the Disciples. Frequently I am asked by correspondents if my preaching and doctrine are in accord with that commonly held by the so-called Christian churches, or Disciples.

The most important thing the Christian church holds, I am heartily in accord with, and that is the confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ,

the son of God and the Savior of the world. Many other churches also hold that statement as the center of their teaching, and with any church that does, I am, in so far, in hearty accord.

When, however, it comes to unimportant matters — or matters that seem to me unimportant — like baptism by immersion as the only possible form and therefore to be rated as a doctrine of the first rank, I am not in accord with the mass of the Christian churches. This is because most of them, too, believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and their infallible authority. I do not, and therefore might be said to be out of accord with the general run of thought in Christian churches.

I believe, therefore, that people of all churches ought to pass from one church to another upon their letters or their statements of membership without re-baptism or any other such rite. In this I am not in accord with the majority of Christian churches. I do believe that to exchange members in this way would greatly promote the cause of Christian union which is the real reason for being that the Christian churches, so called, possess. More than that, I believe that the sentiment in favor of such a free interchange of members, called open-membership, is growing among the Christian churches, Baptist churches,

and others; therefore, I believe that I am in sympathy and hearty accord with Christian churches as they will be in the near future.

Our young people, in particular, are not greatly interested in the form of baptism, verbal inspiration and infallibility, or any of these topics which, to this age, seem comparatively unimportant; but they are greatly interested in the person of Jesus and they have a very high reverence for him; and what the young people of today are, the future is going to be.

"Does Jesus' teaching fit our time?" I don't think of Jesus as belonging to any one race or time. What he said and did is of universal validity. He was a cosmopolitan, a man of all times and all nations. To be sure, there are some minor matters in which he addressed particularly his own time and the people surrounding him. For example, he told his followers, when he sent them out to teach, not to take any money nor any food, but to depend upon the hospitality of those among whom they went. Probably he would not advise the same thing in the different circumstances and in the differing views of hospitality in these railroad and airplane days. He advised his followers never under any circumstances to go to court, but to allow

anybody to take away their cloaks, coats, or anything else they had, rather than to go to law. His purpose was to take out of the hearts and lives of the early Christian community all contentiousness, and to teach them a drastic lesson in mildness and gentleness. He would probably not give the same advice to all his followers today. He told his disciples to wash each other's feet. It was a custom of the time. It is not a custom of this time. The principle underlying it, however, the principle of kindness, courtesy, hospitality, and service to others, is an everlasting principle, current coin now as well as then.

Yes, he told us more about religion than anybody else has ever told us, more about God, more about right relations with one another and with God, more about the future life. Still further, he illustrated his words in his own acts of sympathy, of understanding, and paid the price of his preachments with his life.

BURRIS JENKINS

KANSAS CITY
1928

American Paganism

We frequently hear the statement made that America is becoming more and more a pagan land; and one wonders if it may not be true. We hear that the Protestant church is dead, that the Catholic church has little left but form, and that even the Jewish people have lost their ancient religion and have become free thinkers and agnostics. H. L. Mencken and his followers have reached these conclusions and loudly proclaimed them. I have information direct from certain of our colleges that the student body, for the most part, believes that faith in God is futile; that all old beliefs have crumbled and fallen before the new science of our time; and that the students themselves are frankly pagan.

First, in considering this question, one must inquire as to the meaning of the word "pagan." It derives from a Latin word, *pagus,* a village; and originally it meant a country-man, a villager, a rustic; then it came to be applied to a worshiper of strange gods, idols, and was used interchangeably with the word "heathen." Today, "heathen" has gone out of use. We no longer speak of devotees of another religion than our

own as heathen. What, then, does the word pagan signify to us at the present time? I cannot speak for others, but to me the word pagan carries about this connotation: one who pretends a belief in a God or gods in whom he really does not believe; one who really has no spiritual beliefs and no gods; one who may go through the form of acknowledging certain deities whom, in his heart, he believes to be mythical; one whose philosophy is confined to the life that now is, with its material environment and its mechanistic view of the world; one who either eats, drinks, and is merry for tomorrow he dies, or stands stubbornly taking the storm of life as it comes without hope or expectation; an epicurean or a stoic. The word pagan, to my mind, perhaps prejudiced from much reading of the New Testament, signifies something of the classic atmosphere of Greece and Rome, particularly in later periods when the older worship of the true and the beautiful and the good had given way to a mere formalism, a mechanical and perfunctory bowing down before images, marble and bronze, and when bread and games constituted the supreme demand. The question then becomes, Is America going the way of old Rome? Is she losing all faith, and is she contenting herself with materialism, mechanism, power and force, bodily indul-

gence, with little or no thought for the spiritual, for reason and beauty, truth and art, and all those fine things which live inside of us and cannot be seen?

To state the question is to begin to answer it. There can be little doubt that American life is highly materialistic. For the matter of that, life always has been, in every land and in every time, materialistic. Those instincts which lie at the root of being and the preservation of being are founded and grounded in the material. We are all frankly acknowledging the influence of biology upon even the inner life and attitudes of men. We have only recently learned, although it has been plainly before our eyes all these centuries, how intimate is the union between the body of man and what we have so long called the soul. Starvation cannot accompany high mental efficiency or artistic aspiration. Disease is not the side partner of literary or even administrative genius. Unless muscles, nerves, and glands are in good working order the mind does not hit on all four, six, or eight, as the case may be. In order, therefore, to attain high spiritual efficiency, it is essential, as long as we stay in the flesh, to pay some attention to material well-being, health, comfort, athletic training. As is so often the case, we find our question resolving

itself into a matter of degree, of balanced emphasis and proper adjustment between two things not mutually exclusive but both necessary to a sane and wholesome life. Is America paying too much attention to the material, the machine, the luxuries and the indulgences which come with material prosperity and success? The answer is, perhaps, influenced by the personal equation of each one of us.

For myself, I think the danger of over-emphasis upon the material to be very great. It is easy for us in this country to forget how to walk, how to ride, how to endure; to become flabby and fat and lazy; to lose muscle in layers of adipose tissue; to lose will in taking lines of least resistance. Nevertheless, it may well occur to us that there is enough hardness in life at the easiest and best to toughen the fibre of character, will, heart, mind, and to create longings for those good things which transcend the merely physical condition. There are evidences that the American heart as a whole still worships real gods, the gods of truth, science, and literature, the gods of art, architecture, and music, the gods of nature, beauty of landscape and the appreciation of it, the gods of the thin upper air, exploration, experimentation, speculation. We are not all lost in the gutters and the warrens of a purely physi-

cal materialism. Else how could we develop our own American types of building, our own American poets, our own American music? A writer in The New Republic, recently describing Kansas City, and looking us over with a lofty cynicism, pays grudging tribute to at least one spiritual element that he acknowledges to be very powerful in this "Heart of America" — the love of music. That's something spiritual, anyway, isn't it?

Perhaps the real test of the degree of American paganism is to come in the near future in our attitude concerning force as opposed to reason in getting commercial advantage throughout the world. The pagan appeal is forever to power. That's what wealth is, power; and we have the same wealth and the same power in the modern world that Rome had in the classical. How shall we use it? Upon the answer to that question depends our destiny. If we make a pagan use of that power, as Rome made, then our end is destruction, for our god is our belly. We are just entering upon that testing time; this is our first decade of it. Up to the present moment, we have shown only slight evidences of a desire to replace force with reason and fellow-feeling for the rest of the world. We have, however, made some gestures that would indicate a sort of dumb, grop-

ing aspiration toward a foreign policy of live and let live, of comity and even fraternity among the nations, of peace on earth and good will to men. Unless we make those gestures real and unless we go even to the point of sacrifice in our dealings with other races, we may protest never so loudly our high ideals, we shall nevertheless be justly regarded as pagan and shall meet the destruction that paganism has ever invited. What I am talking about is the grabbing of oil concessions, regardless of the rights and needs of others, the commercial penetration and exploitation of other peoples just because we have the power, the collection of tribute, whether legally or no, over long periods of time from the other proud peoples of the earth. These things may be justified by purely material and economic laws, but none the less they are the path of paganism which can lead to nothing but destruction.

Within our own social structure there is frequent emphasis upon the chaotic conditions prevailing. For example, in our marriage practices. They tell us these are pagan, and that whereas the Turk takes four wives all at once, the American takes four in succession. We constantly hear the accusation that America is sex-obsessed, sex-mad. If this is true, then indeed are we walking a pagan road. But is it true, beyond other times

and other peoples? For one I do not believe so. As a matter of fact, the dominant interest of humanity aside from food has always been and will forever be the relations between men and women. So in a sense one may say that humanity is always sex-obsessed. The only change that has come about in America of late is that we have become conscious of this condition and are disposed to be more honest about it and to deal with this most powerful of all human urges in a more or less scientific and intelligent fashion. This much is certainly true, that the old era of blindness, of hiding our heads like ostriches in the sand, is gone. We are substituting for puritanism, with its denials that there is any such thing as legitimate sex life, and with its consequent repressions and hypocrisies, a new era of scientific investigation, experimentation, that may be excessive in some of its manifestations, but is none the less bound to be salutary and wholesome in its ultimate findings. It is futile to denounce the amount of divorce in American life, now averaging one out of every six marriages, as this is rather a symptom than a disease. Foolish to treat symptoms, all doctors agree. The thing to do is to treat the disease. And what is the disease? Ignorance. The old policy of silence and hypocrisy can lead only to ignorance, dis-

torted views, morbid and vicious practices. True light is the enemy of all paganism.

Instead, then, of promoting and confirming ignorance about this most primal instinct of humanity, our true policy of safety is to recognize its importance, its essential goodness and purity, its legitimate expression in all our life, artistic, literary, religious; for it plays its part in all phases of human existence. It is a great pity, the ignorance and blindness with which people plunge into matrimony, the most difficult and highly skillful game that human beings play. I wish I could have an hour each with every bride and every groom that I am called upon to marry. Almost invariably my heart goes out to them as they stand before me in their innocence and in the terrible depths of their ignorance. No wonder they quake and are afraid.

The Methodist general conference recently advised all those contemplating marriage to consult their ministers and their doctors. I freely confess that I did that previous to marriage and got nothing that was of any value to me. How many rough spots and hard days would have been saved to us, my wife and me, if somebody had given us honest and intelligent guidance. The doctors can't do it. They are prohibited by law, think of that! There is nothing more important for

young people intending marriage to learn about than birth limitation, particularly young people of the working classes. Middle class and well-to-do people already know a lot about it, information gained one way or another, by hook or by crook, and they all practice it; but the poorer classes, the very ones that ought to limit the number of their children to those whom they can successfully rear and make into good citizens, cannot gain information from their physicians. There is a United States statute forbidding the carrying of any such information through the mails, and therefore the doctors cannot publish in their medical journals what they know, and so cannot learn from one another. We have a Missouri statute forbidding even the oral giving of information upon this subject. Don't you call that pagan? If not, then what do you call it? Holland and Switzerland, both of them virile and powerful little lands, have legally constituted authorities to give their people instruction upon birth regulation. England is learning rapidly; but France, on account of her religious traditions, cannot legally permit her people to learn. Her middle and upper classes, just as in this republic, can get the needed knowledge; but her lower classes cannot.

It is scarcely permissible for ministers to write

as I am writing; but knowing as they do the fatal ignorance of the majority who enter upon matrimony, they are beginning to break loose and, either in private conferences or public utterance, are beginning to give some guidance to their people. Maude Royden, an unmarried woman in England, has published one of the best books on this theme, and Sherwood Eddy has put a priceless chapter on this subject into his recent volume on "Religion and Social Justice." For myself, I have long been determined to give the utmost help that I can to any inquiring young people or even older people who may come to me. I know so much of the quagmires into which ignorance tumbles so many people, choking out happiness, successful married life, and the efficient rearing of new citizens for the nation, that I will not keep hidden what little I have learned through the hard experience of many years. Nor is this one matter of birth limitation the whole of the story; there is much else that people ought to learn in advance of marriage that can make either for failure or success according to whether they are ignorant or enlightened.

In general, the question whether we are to be a pagan people must be answered according to the aim with which the young generation now just coming on shoulders the burdens of the

life of the republic. What do most boys and girls consider the aim in life to be? What is their idea of success? We elders, it appears, are proud of them when they make such and such incomes. Almost invariably we test our boys' success by the size of their pay envelopes, by the style in which they live, by what they can furnish their wives and children. Same old story of materialism. But are the Virginians coming again — a generation of hard-muscled, long-legged young people, wood-carvers, builders, story tellers, poets, painters? It seems to me I can hear young people today asking how to make their lives count, how to grow, how to add to the sum of social good, how to spend themselves with the greatest economy and efficiency, how to make the most of themselves. The more that type of inquiry increases, and the less they read in the magazines about the so-called successful men who by toil early and late, by ruthless exploitation of their fellow men, by striding strongly over the necks of the prostrate, have attained to great accumulation of mere money and power, the more our young people will grow out of the danger of paganism into the promise of a really religious tone that will mean salvation for them and for the republic.

Tomorrow, America will be pagan if the

merely material dominates; it will be religious, no matter what its creed, if it looks above the merely material to the artistic, the literary, the musical, the architectural, in short the spiritual in a thousand ways. It will be pagan if it thinks only of its own power, the protection and defense of power, the increase and aggrandizement of power; it will be religious if it uses the power which the Almighty has placed in its hands, or whatever gods may be, for the peace and the betterment of all men everywhere, if it has imagination enough to see distant races, yellow, black and brown, and share to a degree the emotions and aspirations under their alien skins. It will be pagan, if it sinks into a slough of sensualism, sexual or otherwise; it will be religious if it wins through its period of experimentation to a finer appreciation of the God-given instincts so powerful in us all. It will be pagan, if it continues the worship of what we have too long called success, regardless of the means by which attained; it will be religious in the highest and best sense of that word, if it keeps alight fires of idealism, of high and fine aspiration far above the level of animal comfort and animal ease.

Spirituality—What?

We frequently use the word "spirituality" without any very definite sense. I would like for us to ponder that word a little and see if we cannot know better what we are talking about when we use it. Our indefiniteness in the use of this word no doubt springs partly from our outworn science. We used to think of the body, the mind, and the spirit as three departments of man's being, which we do not now do. The spirit was some sort of ghost-like or wraith-like tissue-paper thing inside of us that kept the body alive and going. We felt that at death this vaporous, silver tinsel something within came out with the breath, or out at the top of the head, and floated off on the wind or was carried away in the arms of angels upward somewhere, some way, into the sky. Now we know that body, mind, and vital force are all intimately connected, that one affects the others, that the healthiness of one is generally the healthiness of the others, and pain in one produces pain in the others.

Nevertheless, the words "spirit" and "spirituality" are too valuable to be thrown away. They have an intelligent use if only we can approach

them intelligently. Mind and body are not enough for man; they leave him incomplete. The body is his house, the material part of him with which he adapts himself to the material world round him. With his mind he searches out the truths which give him this power of adaptation. But there is more than this to him. He could be body and mind and be purely a selfish and marauding creature, as some are; but his spirit helps him to decide which of the facts and truths in his life in this material world are for the good, the better and the best. It is that faculty which enables him to say, "This is good and this is beautiful," or, on the other hand, "This is bad and this is ugly."

How, then, are you to test any individual or any group, say a church, as to whether it or he is spiritual or not? You often hear people say, "That church is not spiritual" or "That other church is highly spiritual." What are your standards of judgment? Obviously, architecture is no adequate test; crowds are not. Church finances are no barometer. Neither is lovely music nor eloquent sermons nor the looks of satisfaction on people's faces, except in so far as these things are testimony to the presence of the true and the beautiful and the good.

I don't know anything which has done more

damage to real religion and led to more unlovely excesses than the misuse and misconception of the word "spiritual." Perhaps most people, when they use it, think of something opposite from bodily or worldly. If this were correct, then the weaker the body the stronger the spirit, and the less of contact with the world the more the life of the spirit. You see at once the logic of such a position. It leads to asceticism, the starving and the mortification of the body, flagellations and hermitages; or it leads to a self-centered and pharisaical egoism, a cant of set phrases and holy tones, a faith without works, a withdrawal into one's self from contact with the world, an utter egocentricity. Both of these extremes are far away from the spirit and the teaching of the Christ, who was no ascetic, no Pharisee, no egoist.

To test a church as to whether it is spiritual or not, H. A. Overstreet, professor of psychology in the College of the City of New York, from whom I borrow some of my train of thought in this chapter suggests five questions. You can easily think of others, but these five will do for the start: First, has the church done anything differently during the last year? Second, has the inspiration for these new things come solely from the top down, from the minister, or has it, time and again,

come from the group members themselves? Third, during the last year, let us say, has the group concerned itself with anything outside the church itself? Fourth, how many members belong to the prejudice-fostering groups, groups that breed hatred through a distortion of fact? On the other hand, how many members belong to groups that are organized for the deliberate purpose of finding out the truth about human matters? Fifth, is the church tribal-minded? How many members belong to world associations, associations for promoting world peace, for developing the international mind?

That's rather different from the old way of testing a church or an individual as to spirituality by the absence of vigor, growth, originality, and general vital force. According to the old idea, the more emaciated, anemic, and unhealthy the individual, the more likely he was to be a saint. I have known an unhealthy minister to grow robust, muscular, and even fat, and have heard people say about him, " He's lost his spirituality." Evidently Professor Overstreet does not believe that spirituality is in direct proportion to emaciation or anemia, or in inverse proportion to avoirdupois. The saintliest people I can think of on the spur of the moment have been the most robust, such as Robert E. Speer, former football

man at Princeton; Dwight L. Moody, round as a barrel and bubbling with humor; Charles Spurgeon, ugly as a chimpanzee and just as strong; Phillips Brooks, six feet four, built like a Hercules and with the face of a Greek god. No, saintliness or spirituality is not weakness of body or mind. It may go with a frail body, or it may not. Sometimes a handicap helps toward it, sometimes not.

Neither is spirituality to be identified with certain tones, a set of phrases repeated over and over in a kind of sing-song manner, a holy tone, a sort of outward unction. I have seen these things connected with certain denominations, certain movements, certain groups until their devotees have come to the conclusion that where the whine is not present there is no spirituality. Generally this holy tone, and this set of cant phrases, comes from imitation of some leader who may or may not have been highly spiritual, but whose outward manner has been copied and aped by his followers until they think that the manner is the essence of the spirit.

Neither is spirituality the same as solemnity, lugubriousness, ponderosity, melancholia. Some people think that the sadder they are, the more rigid their countenances, the more granite-like the set of their features, the more religious they

are. I have known people to leave my church because they said it was not spiritual enough, when really the thing they objected to was the atmosphere of joy we try to create, the changes which have marked growth, and the inventiveness in social welfare manifested by the people who assemble there. Some of these people who have gone I, for one, am very glad to bid goodbye, as their faces always acted like a shower of cold water upon my spirit; and some of them whom I have introduced to certain social circles proved themselves impossible in a social environment. According to the tests of Professor Overstreet, they were far from spiritual.

No, spirituality is sometimes absent from a hatchet face and present in a big, broad, leonine one. Too often those people who are constantly harping upon spirituality, which they generally call " spirichality," don't know what they're talking about. According to them, a consumptive almost dead, whose hands you can see through, skin and bone, feeble and querulous, is the nearest approach to spirituality. They themselves have a sort of tuberculosis of the brain, or a paralysis of the vital force.

" What can these do with immortality
Who sour the sweet of life with dour minds,

Who never learned that living beautifully
Is man's excuse for being?

They gnaw the rinds
Of life, and hope by going like a mouse
In fear and trembling, with oft bended knees,
Some day to find where God himself keeps house,
And creep in there and nibble heavenly cheese!"

Those words, out of a fugitive poem called "The Sanctimonious," exactly fit the kind of people upon whose lips the word "spirichality" is most often heard and by whom it is thoroughly misunderstood.

Now to go back to Professor Overstreet's tests. They are hard enough to apply. Who of us is able to tell how your church, or mine for instance, stacks up according to these tests? Have any changes taken place there in the last year? Yes, a few. My church is nothing if not an experiment station. Everybody knows we are willing to try anything once, and maybe twice. Do these new enterprises come from the top down? Or do they originate with the people themselves? Some of both, I should say. The four ministers of Linwood Church meet at breakfast at my house every Monday morning, mostly to hear or to tell

some new thing. But I see a few new things coming on which I am sure did not originate with the corps of ministers. Yes, I think there is some life here, some growth; how much, it is hard to tell.

Has your church or mine undertaken anything outside the church itself? I should say Yes, with a number of things, with missions at home and abroad, with Near East Relief, with a modicum of charity, with a few civic and social enterprises. How many of our members belong to groups that breed hatred and prejudice? Anybody, for example, belong to the Ku Klux Klan? They won't tell it if they do. So you see how hard it is to apply the test. Anybody belong to other so-called patriotic organizations which are really militaristic at heart and foster prejudice against other nations? Yes, I imagine there are quite a number. Anybody, on the other hand, belong to interracial committees, World Court societies, the League of Nations Non-partisan Association, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, or other societies organized for the purpose of finding out the truth about human matters? I fancy a few of our people are listed among those who are trying to make for human brotherhood. Dr. Overstreet's last test is equally hard to answer. Is this particular church tribal-minded? Do we think of

America and America only? Or are we big enough to think of the rights, the welfare, and the peace of all the rest of the world as well as of the United States? How idealistic are we? How world-minded?

You see how searching are these tests. They get way down underneath any whining, any holy tone, any cant, any hypocrisy, to the very roots of our being. And how do we measure up before the face of the Lord God? Let churches get down on their knees, mentally and spiritually, and ask themselves these questions.

And let each one of us individually search his own heart in the same way. How many who have thought themselves first will find themselves last; and how many that were last shall be first! Have I grown in the past year? I cannot answer that question for myself. No one of us can. Growth is a thing of which we cannot be well aware. Our friends must determine that for us. By their fruits ye shall know them. I see people all round me who are not growing at all; and I see some, thank God, that evidently are. Unless you grow you are not spiritual. If you have reached forty years of age and have your mind all made up about every question, political, social, religious, economic, and can't be budged from your concrete foundations, you are not spiritual.

If your mind is open, and you take new truth and take it kindly, eagerly, gladly, then are you growing, then are you spiritual. And so on down this list of test questions. You can't apply them to yourself; get your wife to do it, or your husband, and my word for it, it will be done incisively. Get your children to try it on you. Get your church friends to try it; but for the love of heaven, don't talk about spirituality, far less judge anybody else's spirituality, until you have first tried these tests on yourself.

Now comes Paul's list of test questions, a psychologist far older than Dr. Overstreet, and as wise as any of us even in our modern day. Paul tells us what the fruits of spirituality are: Have you love? Joy? Peace? Forbearance? Kindness? Goodness? Faithfulness, or loyalty? Meekness, a modest estimate of yourself? Moderation in everything — eating, drinking, speaking? You cannot test yourself with regard to these. Leave it to those who love you. You cannot discern how spiritual you are; nor can you discern how spiritual most other people are unless you are very intimately associated with them. Of this be assured, however, that you are spiritual only as you show these fruits of the spirit, listed by Dr. Overstreet and by St. Paul.

The most spiritual person who ever walked

this earth made the impression on the world that he was not ascetic, not anemic, not egocentric; but he was robust, in the best sense of the word a man of the world, eating and drinking with his fellowmen, fond of company, happy and even joyous, smiling and even laughing, sometimes solemn enough in view of the great task before him and the high idealism cherished by him, but none the less radiant, shining like a light. He grew in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man. He tried new things and proposed new measures. He had no association with prejudice-forming groups and no tolerance for Pharisees of any kind. Never class-minded, but always man-conscious; never tribal, but always world-wide, in thinking and sympathy; never whining, uttering no cant — he is the final standard of spirituality, and before him everyone of us must bow his head and say, "Depart from me, O Lord," or better, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man; I am not spiritual; I am only trying to become spiritual."

The Church—Which Way?

When you hear the words, "I will build my church on this rock," what do you think of as being built upon this rock? Is it a house, of timber or brick or stone? Is it a group of people, an assembly, a congregation? Or is it an institution, an organization with officials, deacons and elders, bishops and ecclesiastics? These are the three possible meanings of the word church — a building, a congregation, or an institution. I suppose most of us when we were children, when we heard the word church, immediately thought of the meeting-house which we had attended ever since we could remember. It takes only a little reflection, however, to reveal that this idea is inadequate. To entertain it is to take the symbol for the thing signified, the container for the thing contained. Manifestly a white board building with a cupola, or a red brick building with a steeple, is not what Jesus meant when he said, "I will build my church upon this rock." Our fathers were much more accurate when they spoke of the building as a meeting-house.

Neither does it seem that our Lord had in mind an ecclesiastical institution, with deliberative

bodies, to say nothing of legislative ones, with treasuries and hierarchies, disciplines, mandates, and excommunications. Jesus apparently had small respect for such machinery, though no doubt he realized that some organization might in the long run be necessary to implant his ideals. He had gone up against such an institution in the Jewish temple, half state, half church, which had opposed him at every step. He made no attempt at an organization with which to combat it. The nearest he came to organizing anything was the selection of a cabinet or committee of twelve men to carry on his work after he was gone; and he thought of them rather as learners to whom he hoped to impart his teaching and his spirit.

No, it would seem that when Jesus used this word "church" he thought of it only as the group of his followers, his learners, those who listened to him and to his apostles after him, those who tried to catch some vision of what he was driving at and tried to put it into practice in their lives and in their society. His idea, I think, was that the people constituted his church, the people who declare for him as Peter had declared for him just before Jesus uttered these words about the church on the rock. It is true, I believe, as our pioneer fathers used to teach and preach, that Jesus meant by this utterance that upon the confessing

believer he would build the assembly of his followers, his body of disciples or learners, the association of his adherents. This interpretation of the word church is borne out, too, by that book called the Acts of the Apostles and by the letters of St. Paul. The word translated church means, in the original Greek, just an assembly, a group, a company of people. No matter what the object for which people were called together, whether it was a town meeting in Athens or a revolutionary party in Asia Minor, no matter what the time or place, any assemblage of people was an *ecclesia,* a church. The New Testament writers simply adopt that term and adapt it to signify the assemblage of believers in Christ. This is the original meaning of the word church and we ought not to get too far away from it.

I realize the necessity of changing the meaning of a term with the course of time, through generations and centuries, and yet there is danger to clear thinking, if we are not careful, in these changing shades of meaning. For the sake of convenience we have to speak of a building by using the word "church"; or we have to speak of the institution in all lands and under varied forms as the church; we are even forced to speak of a sect or denomination, just a little sliver of the vast assemblage of his followers, as a church; but

in all this we ought to recognize the derived meaning which we are employing and ought to understand the figurativeness, the limitations, and the inaccuracy of our terminology. Strictly, the word church means only the people, the assemblage, the followers of Jesus.

Naturally, therefore, we create a confusion when we speak of the church as synonymous with the kingdom of God that Jesus talked so much about. Evidently the church is not the kingdom of God, nor is the kingdom of God co-terminous with the church. The kingdom of God reaches far outside the church; there are many in it who are not at all in the church; and there are many in the church who are not at all in the kingdom. The kingdom of God is a highly figurative and highly spiritual conception of the presence of God in the hearts of men and women, the realm of God among men, the reign of God everywhere on the earth. Wherever truth, beauty, goodness, any and all of the attributes of God and of Jesus, the acme of mankind, are to be found, there, just so much, is the kingdom of God. And wherever these attributes are absent, even though it be in a so-called church, wherever there is bitterness and hardness, ugliness and falsehood, there the kingdom is not present. The old hymn is decidedly confusing which runs:

"I love thy kingdom, Lord, the house of thine
abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved, with
his own precious blood."

Here church and kingdom are used in apposition, and it is only by a *tour de force* of the mind that one can sing that hymn at all in truthfulness.

From these observations it follows that no church building is in itself holy, sacrosanct, especially hallowed, taboo, or otherwise by some shadowy miraculous process made inviolate. It may be a place of sacred memories, a place to a degree hallowed by the frequency with which devoted people have come there; but after all it is the people who are devoted and not the place. The place is only so much of earth, covered with stone or brick. Strictly it is nothing but a building, just as the city hall is, or the courthouse, or the capitol. One may go into a great cathedral, hushed and awe-struck, just as he goes into the Supreme Court room at Washington and stands speaking only in whispers, not because the stones in either of these places are any more holy than the stones out yonder on the mountainside, but just because of the stream of history that has flowed through these precincts, because of the

great souls who have here lived and striven or kneeled and worshiped. It is the people who are holy and not the place. To make magic out of arches and pillars, stained glass windows and mosaic pavements, is just as superstitious as to make magic out of certain high places and caves, as ancient man did; and I do well to try to destroy such vestiges of superstition in modern minds. Jesus tried to do it in ancient minds. Wherever any temple, any stone, any institution or erection made by men, whether a ceremonial, or sacred books, or Sabbath, or what not, got in the way of the growth and development of man, he destroyed it, crushed it, left not one stone upon another of it, but swept it out of the way to set free the expansiveness of man. He declared that all these things were made for man, not man for them. When any building, or any mere institution, cripples the action of men, the freedom and the largeness of human living, it is in harmony with the spirit of Jesus to come striding into the sanctuary and tip over the tables and drive out them that buy and sell the souls of men.

It follows furthermore that the church, or the assembly, is not an end in itself but only a means to an end. People don't assemble just to see how big a crowd they can create, or, if they do, it is but folly on their part. They get together for an

object, to accomplish some purpose. So the church assembles itself not for its own glorification, and not to see how big a noise it can make, and not to show itself how great and important it is, but with a very definite end and aim. Very easily we may slip into emphasis on the means rather than upon the end. Unless we are constantly vigilant, we find ourselves regarding the means, the church itself, as the object of our attention and our glorification. We become easily absorbed in increasing the numbers of the assembly, the treasuries that support the assembly, the buildings that house the assembly, instead of focusing all our thought and endeavor upon the object for which the assembly is designed. The church is only the casket that enshrines a precious jewel, the pearl of great price. It is only the system of conduits or waterpipes through which flows the water of life. It is not the jewel itself, nor the water itself. When, therefore, we become absorbed in the administration of church life, in its officialdom and its ecclesiasticism, we are putting the cart before the horse, taking the container for the thing contained. When we play politics in the church, seek or trade offices in the church, give all our attention to the machinery of the church, losing sight of the great end and aim in the multiplicity of details, we are missing the

whole spirit of that which Jesus founded upon the rock.

I know that an institution is necessary to the life and propagation of any great idea or ideal. It has ever been so and must ever be. Man is a gregarious animal; he hunts in packs and runs in herds. To build anything of enduring character and far-reaching influence, he must work with his fellows; and to work with his fellows there must be order and organization. Assembly is therefore essential, inevitable, to the advancement of the cause. That men attack and denounce the organization is partly due to the faultiness of the organization itself, to its absorption in itself and its glorification of itself; and then it is partly due to the short-sightedness of the critics who cannot see the necessity of the assembly, and the poverty of their own lives if lived without the influence of the church. What poor fool who slings mud at the church would, if he had sense enough to think deeply, want to see the church taken out of our cities, towns and country? We have banditry enough, God knows. How much more should we have if the church were not here to hold back a little bit of the tide of crime. We are selfish and brutish enough in spite of all good influences. How brutish and chaotic our life would become without the ideals held aloft on the slender fingers

of church spires above our heads! The very sternest critics of the church in their moments of deepest need call out for her ministration and protecting arms. Let them be sick to death and they forget their denunciation and call for her help, her faith and her support. Worse yet, let them lose one who is dearer to them than their own lives and they are not willing to see that precious one laid in the ground without the solace, the ceremonial, and the spoken hope of immortality which comes only from the assembly of the Nazarene. Let them reel and stagger with perplexity and misfortune, danger and grief, and they fly for refuge to the church of the Redeemer. The very institution itself is an absolute essential in human life and we cannot get on without it.

What, then, is the end for which the church is the means? I have already anticipated the statement. The end and aim of the church, or assembly of the followers of Jesus, is the creation of the kingdom of God upon earth, the reign of God in the hearts of men, the realm and presence of God in the affairs of men. This end is therefore both social and individual. It is the creation of a better environment for man to live in. It is the making of better nations, better cities, better social lives, better homes; everything pertaining to this end is the immediate business of the church.

Men say, "The church has no business talking politics, dealing with labor questions, with city government, with economic affairs, with foreign relations. Let the church stick to religion and leave politics alone." Just as well say, "Stick to religion and leave out the very things that make or mar religion." How is anybody going to be deeply religious and all the time have a sense of economic injustice, to say nothing of a hungry stomach and skinny half-fed children and a dirty, unwholesome house? How is anybody going to be a contented Christian and all the time feel that he is forced to pay exorbitant taxes to an inefficient and corrupt government? How is anybody going to be a serene and satisfied religionist when drafted into a foreign war thrust upon him by a little company of greedy or bungling old men? These are precisely the questions which the assembly of Jesus Christ is in this world to grapple with! These are the very gates of hell that he declared should not prevail against his church. Pusillanimous indeed is the pulpit of any church which refuses, through subserviency and fear of the narrow-minded and short-sighted within the assembly itself, to speak boldly and plainly like a flaming Isaiah against all these things which cripple and defeat the coming kingdom of God in this world.

The church also is the instrument for polishing and refining the individual followers of Jesus. We get together to help each other grow in grace, in wisdom, and in all those beauties of character which marked him whose we are and whom we serve. We assemble Sunday after Sunday, and through the week times, again and again, if we know what we are about, looking for the springs of kindness, gentleness, love and that finest self-development which is found in self-effacement. In other words, the assembly or church is a family, a home, a brotherhood. Read the words of Christ and in them all you find that he wants his followers to bear toward each other and toward the world the same graces which are found in an ideal home. Mutual service, thoughtfulness and affection: these are the ends of the church. A club, men say the church has become? Yes, the best type of club, where courtesy and kindliness belong to every member. The church is the only club that some of us belong to, and it is the best club that any of us belong to. Suppers? Yes, we have suppers in homes, and parties, and all kinds of music, and everything beautiful in pictures and books that we can obtain. That is exactly the kind of home that the church should try to be, for in that home is to be found the kingdom of God on earth, the family

of Jesus, his beloved community. Furthermore, like home, it is a refuge in time of storm, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, a very present help in trouble.

Anything less than this high standard does not meet the mind of Christ. A building, however beautiful and however charged with dear and inspiring memories, does not fulfill the ideal of Jesus when he speaks of "my church." No institution, however valuable and important, meets his purposes, for he thinks little of institutions and much of men. Men are his means, his fulcrum and lever with which to lift themselves and the whole round world a little nearer to the realm of God. They are his means to the end. So we may sing, if we sing with understanding:

"I love thy kingdom, Lord, the house of thine
abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved with
his own precious blood."

The Bible Infallible?

Most of us in middle life, and perhaps many who are younger, were brought up to believe that the Bible is an infallible book, word for word inspired, and that everything between its covers is to be taken as literally and unalterably true. My mother would never permit any other book to be laid on top of the Bible on the table. She kept it scrupulously dusted on the outside and scrupulously read on the inside. An encyclopedia or other big book might be put into a dining room chair for one of us children to sit on, but never the Bible. The Bible was regarded by the generation which is just gone as a sort of fetish, almost an idol, very nearly an object of worship. The word " bibliolatry " might be applied to the attitude of that generation. It was sufficient in those days to quote the Bible, Old or New Testament regardless, and no matter who the particular writer, and that settled all controversy. " The Bible says so and so," and that was the end of all discussion.

How did we get that way? The Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther and his confreres got us that way. It is hard for some of us

to understand that this view of the Bible is only about three hundred years old; but three hundred years is long enough to make paths in human brains that are extremely hard to obliterate. The leading reformers themselves did not believe in an infallible Bible, but their followers gradually came to believe in it. Martin Luther did not; he spoke of the Epistle of James as an epistle of straw, while he almost worshiped St. Paul's letter to the Galatians. His followers, fighting to clear the ground for Protestantism, and constantly running up against the authority of an infallible Pope, felt the need of an infallibility of their own to which to appeal, and, looking round for such a source of authority, they hit upon the Bible. This is the origin of the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, which has been handed on to our time and from which it is so hard to struggle free.

What is the effect upon our thinking? The effect is fundamentalism, a large group of Protestants — I may say a heavy majority of Protestants — who still believe in the infallibility of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, with all the hard and fast attitudes of mind and spirit that would naturally ensue from such literalism. The result is, further, that one who holds to this post-reformation doctrine cannot discuss any religious

subject intelligently with one who has shaken free from it. The believer in infallibility quotes the Bible as his final proof, regardless of whether that quotation comes from Isaiah, or from Genesis, or from St. Paul or Jesus. If you ask him who uttered the words he quotes, and what was the time and what the circumstances under which they were spoken, he opens his eyes in wonder and amazement, and you can't go on arguing with him. There is simply no common ground where the feet of the literalist may stand beside the feet of one who does not hold to the infallibility of the Bible, and where they may meet and carry on any fruitful conversation.

For some three hundred years this position of biblical infallibility held the main line in human thinking, and came down the track, with the green signals shining, with complete right-of-way, at sixty miles an hour. Then about seventy-five years ago another train gathered speed on a side-line, gained in momentum and rapidly gained in size and power, until by and by it also came roaring up the main line, in the opposite direction, at sixty miles an hour; and now the two have met head-on. The crash has been tremendous, and the casualties and fatalities have mounted up to great numbers. It could not be otherwise. About seventy-five years ago the

scientific era was born. Darwin sprang his great discovery of the origin of species, and he was followed by countless scientists who demonstrated to anybody with an open mind the truth that life gradually evolved on this planet from a primal sperm into the most highly organized forms, that the record of it is all written clearly in the rocks, and that it has taken hundreds of thousands of years, possibly millions, for this evolutionary process to bring us to the present hour. What these discoveries did to the account of creation in Genesis was a plenty; and what they did to the old traditional biblical chronology of six thousand years of human life on the earth was plenty more. The Protestant churches are today crawling out of the débris of this collision between the old theory of infallibility and modern scientific discoveries, somewhat bruised and bleeding.

The same thing is true with regard to the same scientific methods applied to history. We have learned to take nothing for granted, but to dig into old heaps of sand where lie buried cities, with their monuments and inscriptions, with their records which may or may not jibe with the so-called history of Israel. We have learned of whole civilizations, far older than Adam, in Egypt, in China, and in India. We have listened to Vedic hymns coming out of Hindu jungles, thousands

of years before the time assigned to the songs of Deborah or of Miriam in the Old Testament. It is impossible to gainsay the assured results of this historical research, and it has played havoc with the old verbal inspiration. Furthermore, we have found plenty of historical mistakes and discrepancies in the books of the Old Testament itself. Ingersoll capitalized this scholarship and made himself famous over the land proclaiming the mistakes of Moses. He couldn't attract any attention with the same message today, because most of his positions are now taken for granted by any student who is open-minded and well trained.

Then came the so-called higher criticism, which is just another name for scientific literary study. Scholars inquired into the authorship of the various books of the Bible, their time and place of writing, oftentimes their composite character (that is, pieced together from a number of different sources) and drew conclusions at variance with the Book-of-Mormon view of the Bible as something let down from heaven, complete and infallible and inspired word for word. They found, for instance, that the book of Genesis was made up of at least three different accounts welded together into one, like a newspaper story of some great fire or crime to which a number of

reporters have been assigned. They found that the first three gospels in the New Testament were very much earlier in date than the fourth gospel. They found that the book of Revelation dates from the close of the first century or possibly the beginning of the second. In short, they found that it makes all the difference in the world which book of the sixty-six in the Bible you are quoting, and whether you quote from the Old Testament or the New.

What, then, is the result of all this new light, and what should be our attitude toward this book which we all still so much revere? We have simply got to give up and throw away this three-hundred-year-old dogma of the literal inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures. We have got to understand that the Bible is not a single book, but a library of books bound together into one volume, and govern ourselves accordingly. We have got to make the division clear and sharp and plain between the Old Testament, on the one hand, and the New Testament, on the other. The former is a series of books setting out the Hebrew conception of the world, of the history of man and of his relation to his Creator. The New Testament is the story of Jesus and the founding of his church, and of the ideas and ideals which spring from his life and his contact with the world.

Alexander Campbell, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, like a voice in the wilderness, insisted upon that difference between the Old Testament and the New, and from his clear thinking on this topic have resulted many of the positions and usages of his followers, as, for example, upon the Sabbath question. It is as futile and unintelligent to say, "The Bible says so and so," as it is to say, "The bound volume of *Harper's Magazine* says so and so," or to say that of any other book made up from the contributions of a large number of writers. The only intelligent way to quote the Bible is to say, "Isaiah says so and so," or Hezekiah, or Luke, or Paul, or Jesus.

Literal inspiration, therefore, gives way to writers' inspiration, which is a thing of degrees, greater or less according to the personal power and insight of the individual writer. The old statement, "The Bible is the word of God," gives way to a revised statement, "The Bible contains the word of God," or "The Bible, some of it, is part of the word of God." The Bible is one of the voices through which God speaks, but there are a hundred others, and pre-eminent among them are the person and ideas and ideals of Jesus the Christ. He is the chief word of God.

One further result is that in reading the Bible we must all bear constantly in mind that it is an

oriental book and that we are western people. We have a phrase, which you run upon frequently in modern writing, to the effect that we must "orient ourselves" in order to take in a certain idea or a certain situation. That is to say, we must try to put ourselves *en rapport* with the spirit of the time and the place; we must try to get into the atmosphere in which the thing or the situation occurred. The speech of the oriental, like that of the North American Indian, is full of figures, highly colored, and therefore not to be taken as you would take a Missouri statute or a demonstration in geometry. To adopt such a verbally literal attitude of mind toward an oriental book or set of books is to put yourself where you miss the whole spirit and meaning of the literature.

Is anything left, then, of the old doctrine of infallibility? It may surprise you when I say, Yes, much; much every way. Infallibly, the Bible will help us every one, no matter what we are after or what our need. If you want to find the best English ever written, and want to steep yourself in it so that you can write and speak good English too, go to the Bible. I don't care whether you take the King James or the revised version, or one of the modern translations by Moffatt, Goodspeed, Kent. You will find there

the best source of culture in the command of the English tongue that you will ever find anywhere. Time was when Harvard never conferred a bachelor's degree upon any student who had not been to drink deeply from this well of English undefiled. If you want plots for stories or novels, you can get them in the Bible — all the plots that ever were invented. There is nothing new under the sun, particularly in plots. Many a modern writer, when up a stump for a skeleton round which to build the fair fabric of his art, has gone to the Bible to find it.

If you are tired, an infallible source of rest comes to you out of the Bible: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," the shepherd's psalm, or "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is a sure instinct which has guided humanity by the millions to read upon retiring at night a chapter here or there from the Bible or to con over its remembered words as, weary and worn, one hangs between waking and sleeping.

Infallible? Certainly this book is infallible, in this deeper, richer sense, infallible to meet all human needs. The old, literal conception of infallibility, a delusion which has existed for only three hundred years, and has done so much to cripple the minds of so many human beings, has

happily crashed and scattered under the collision with our scientific times and the fire of our scientific knowledge. In place of this grievous old dogma, which neither our fathers nor ourselves were able to bear, there has risen a finer and a freer attitude; and this book, tested in the crucible of scholarship as no other book ever has been, has emerged as purified gold from a furnace seven times heated, and we find it today stronger than it has ever been to heal the hurt heart of humanity. It is no longer a fetish, an idol, a taboo; but it is a thing of beauty and a joy, a spring of living water flowing up to everlasting life, full of comfort and consolation, courage and strength, the guide of the living, the solace of the dying.

The Manner of Creation

Every child wants to know how he was made. Almost from the dawn of consciousness the human being is interested in its origin. I suppose every one of us can remember his early speculations and inquiries as to how he happened to be and how things all round him came to exist; I know I can remember very well. Most of us obtained our first satisfactions concerning these questions in the language of the early chapters of Genesis; and I don't suppose anybody has ever improved upon that story as an answer to childish interrogation. It is a whale of a story, no less. The Lord God in it is a majestic artificer, reaching down huge hands as big as continents, from his brooding over the face of the misty deep; drawing the veil of darkness aside, and crying in a voice like thunder, " Let there be light! " Then he separates water from land, drives away mists, makes continents to appear, fish to swim, grass and herbs and trees to grow, animals to spring up from nowhere, and moulds man from the red earth and calls him Adam. That story appealed wonderfully to our childhood imagination, and quieted our questing minds.

Then we reached high school and we took an elementary course in geology or zoology or botany; and, in plain matter-of-fact terms, a very different story sprang up from the pages and struck us in the face. Our teachers talked to us as if it were all an established fact about molten lava, volcanoes, folds and creases in the earth's crust as it gradually cooled; about carboniferous periods ages long, when vast forests fell and rotted where they stood and turned into veins of coal; how leaves were caught between the layers and were left in the strata of the rock to tell the story in unmistakable terms for us, in after ages, plainly to read; how huge animals now extinct remained embedded in skeleton form, dinosaurs, leviathans of land and of sea; and how in the layers of later ages anthropoid apes appeared and after them anthropoid men, tooth and skull, thigh-bone and half-formed hands. This new story is calmly set forth in every textbook and from every teacher's chair where science is taught at all in secondary schools, and it has been so for fifty years.

"How can we reconcile Genesis and geology?" has been a theological question debated in thousands of volumes and millions of words. There is no reconciliation possible, or even needed. As well undertake to reconcile Dante's

" Divine Comedy " or Milton's " Paradise Lost " with the history of Europe or the birth of the American Republic. These things are in differing styles and differing realms. Genesis is plainly poetry, the folklore of a brilliant people, the Hiawatha legendry of a nation which possesses a positive genius for religion. It is a naïve and childlike story, wonderfully beautiful, beyond " Alice in Wonderland," " Gulliver's Travels," or Maeterlinck's " Blue Bird." It grew up among old bards and troubadours, by campfires and among black Bedouin tents under Syrian stars. It was handed on by word of mouth for untold generations and finally committed to writing in Hebrew characters. It satisfied a childlike race just as it satisfies childlike minds to this present hour. It is not fact, it is not science, it is not history; but it is truth, which is greater far than any of these others.

How the debaters have tried to reconcile these two stories, the ancient and the modern! " A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past," has been compelled to get down on all fours to carry desperate religionists who wanted to show that the six days of creation according to Genesis may well mean six thousands of years. But six millenniums is only a drop in the bucket compared with the vast ages of crea-

tive incubation. Six hundred thousand years might serve to advance the process a little way, and six million years might be a trifle better; but now the latest estimates of man's life alone upon this planet are running into the millions of years. Good old Archbishop Ussher figured 4004 B. C. as the date of Adam's birth. I don't think he set the month or the day of the month. But where is that chronology today? Like Sweet Lulu, it is gone where the woodbine twineth.

It is a majestic story, as poetry, this story of Genesis, and it is not to be improved upon; but it is not one whit more majestic than the story which modern science has laid bare in the last seventy-five years or so to our discerning eyes. Frequently I ride across the plains from here to the Rocky Mountains in little more than a night, a journey which would have taken my father when he came here in his youth three months to make. What a mighty hand spread out those plains, marked the river courses through them, hung the mother of pearl mists above them, let down the snow and the ice upon them with an expanding force in freezing to split open the rocks on the mesas. What a hand bent and crumpled the earth crust and tossed up the snowy range like a wave of the sea twelve thousand feet high! Talk about poetry, here is epic grandeur,

and dramatic and tragic, too, unrolled in act after act and scene after scene of heart-moving power. Years ago I went into the crater of Kilauea on the Island of Hawaii, the forge where the almighty Vulcan was visibly at work. Four miles we walked over the hot lava, with hobnail shoes, winding round the great crevices where the sulphurous fumes arose in clouds, until we reached Halemaumau, the everlasting house of fire, the molten lake of lava which lay there ninety feet below the floor of the crater, writhing and boiling and spouting up in thunderous geysers of molten stone and metal, a caldron half a mile in diameter, an awful scene burning in the night. Is this living story, constantly enacted in the earth's crust, in the sky's depths of far-away blue or near-at-hand storm, in the budding of life in the spring, with the power that no hand can stay, and its crash and crumbling and death and winter time — is all this any less a wonderful story than the first chapter of Genesis?

Then, as to the manner of creation. Our teachers told us when we were little, in school and church, that God created everything not merely in six days, but in six words; that he spoke and light divided from darkness, sea from land, vegetation arose, animals breathed and moved, and man rose upright from the dust. He could have

done it all that way, and put the fossils in the completed earth just as it stands today. He could have done it six thousand years ago, or he could have done it yesterday — but he didn't. All the evidence, indubitable, goes to show that he does not work in that way; that fiat is no fad of his; that he works not only slowly but gradually, according to what we call law, that is, set methods of procedure. Here is what all the row was about down at Dayton, Tenn. The mountaineers there insisted that God was in a hurry and did the world all up brown in six days. Here is where the late Colonel Ingersoll got all his facetious thunder and used it to good effect in making himself not only rich but famous. I listened myself to his final reverberations about 1895 in Boston. Even then his message was passé to us Harvard students. We had long ago accepted the modern scientific view that Genesis was poetry, and that God does not and never did work by fiat, but by the slow processes of evolution.

As to the moral view underlying the story of Genesis, we have long ago altered that conception. There was then, and there is now, an age of innocence, an age of irresponsibility, the childhood of each of us as well as the childhood of the race. But to emerge from the Garden of Eden never was a curse, and is not now. There never

was a fall of man, unless you can conceive of a fall upward. On the contrary, there was a steady development of man, a progress, a growth, an evolution from cave dwellers in Eden or out of it, ape-like men with clubs in their hands, and then stone implements, freezing and starving, and then fire and some semblance of shelter, and a gradual growth of social instinct, morals, order, and law. Isn't that a grander story than the beautiful old tale of Eden, with the serpent and the forbidden fruit, the banishment and the awareness of their naked bodies of our reputed ancestors, Adam and Eve? It may be a matter of taste, but I throw my vote for the story of Neanderthal man.

The best brief dissertation I know of on evolution, was written by a professor in Kansas University, the late Dr. William Herbert Carruth, called " Each in His Own Tongue." Poets often see and sing more clearly than either scientists, theologians, or preachers. This is his song:

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod, —

Some call it Evolution
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod,
Some of us call it Autumn
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in:
Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod, —
Some of us call it Longing
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway plod, —
Some call it Consecration
And others call it God.

I think I can see some evil effects of the old Hebrew story of the fall of man, followed by its vicious doctrine of total hereditary depravity. What countless thousands that old legend has filled with fears, with hypocrisies, with a self-righteous sense of a false redemption, and an impossibility of further mistakes and wrong doing! What a wicked old phrase that is, "Born in sin." How many have foolishly leaped to the conclusion that the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was the physical joy of Adam and Eve which resulted in their offspring, as well as in their sense of nakedness! And so there has passed upon the race a penalty of shamefacedness and often of disgust and loathing in connection with that most powerful of all the tendencies of mankind, the tendency to propagation. Universal among all higher animals, God-implanted, law-designed, in the very nature of it, "forbidden fruit" is a misguided and vicious name to be applied to its legitimate function. How many husbands and wives have been separated or heartbroken, how many families crushed, inhibited, or twisted awry by such an unwholesome superstition.

The whole story of the Garden of Eden is founded in the Jewish presupposition that all evil and suffering in this world is due to man's own

fault and wickedness. A long exploded theory, it nevertheless clutches many of us by the throat and turns and twists our lives into strange and fantastic shapes. The sooner we are rid of the doctrine the better. Much of our suffering in this world, yes, most of it, comes upon us through no fault of our own. This ancient Jewish idea, yet contaminating our blood by inheritance, is wickedly false and falls before the sickle of modern science.

The so-called fall of man never took place. Individual men may fall; whole races may have their moments of retrogression; but taken all in all, as we look backward over the millions of years of the records in the earth, we are forced to the conclusion that though progress goes on halting feet, like a mountain climber slipping back time and time again, nevertheless the whole trend is always on and up. The old Hebrew story has had its day — has had its day and ceased to be. Conservative or not, believe it or not, the notion of progress is ingrained in the thinking of our time. It has laid hold of the universal mind at least of all the western world where science is taught. The man in the street who has given no conscious thought at all to the story of creation, much less to the doctrine of evolution, believes in progress. All the time he talks about progress

in business, in the growth of his town or city, his nation or his little world. He cannot think except in terms of progress. Evolution, consciously or unconsciously to himself, lies at the very basis of his intellectual being.

One more word: the story is not told, not finished; creation is not done. We are in the very middle of the drama; we take part in it; we act upon the stage of its fulfilment; we help it along; we are creatures, but we are also ourselves creators; and the best is yet to be. Man came a long way from his anthropoid hunting in the jungle, his jaws dripping blood and his fingers tipped with claws, before he arrived at the acme of the race, the finest product of mankind, the most civilized being that ever trod this earth, the most beautiful product of the thought of God, the divine Son of God, Jesus the Christ. It was a far cry, a deep and a tragic cry, from Neanderthal man to the Man of Nazareth. And it was only yesterday that he came. What is two thousand years in the mighty sweep of this epic story? As we have seen, progress goes forward and then slips back, rises and falls, moves on halting feet, comes in rhythms and heart-beats, waves and tides. It seems to be God's purpose not to make any more Neanderthal and Piltdown men, but, let us hope, to make more men of Nazareth, more

human beings that look like and act like Jesus, the highest reach of creation that we have ever seen — saints like Francis of Assisi, Xavier, Tyndale, Livingston, Gandhi, Kagawa. Perhaps ten thousand years from now, or a hundred thousand, or a million, the earth may be full of such representatives of the divine in man, full of the acme of mankind, and the story of creation will have grown nearer to its end. God is in no hurry.

Our own path stretches perfectly clear and evident before us, to walk in the light of increasing knowledge wherever we can, to take new truth and clothe ourselves in it whenever we see it along the way, to accept new findings and adapt our thought to them, instead of taking our old positions and holding them as defensible against all comers. It is ours to let our imaginations play over the vast reaches of creation, in its well-nigh endless unfolding, in its method of stress and resistance to obstacles and its gradual expansion to higher and finer conditions, in its moral grandeur of experimentation and of increasing social consciousness, what we call its growing civilization, on up to the perfect man, the express image of God the Creator in his Son, Jesus the Christ. It is ours to produce lives as near like his as we may, to produce a society as near like his dreams as we can make it. It is ours to fix our eyes upon

him not because he stands in the past, but because he beckons to us in the yet unrealized future, to emulate his beauty, his courage, his saintliness, and so to glorify our Father by helping him in his story of creation.

Heaven and Hell — What Are They?

Most of us were brought up to think that the most important thing about religion was heaven and hell, and our main object in life to get into the one and to keep out of the other. I can remember very distinctly many times hearing an elder of the old First Christian church of Kansas City, James Burris Atkins — who would have been my godfather, if there had been such things among the Disciples — say in prayer-meeting, "If I can just get into heaven by the skin of my teeth, that's all I ask." I am sure that he went in through wide-open doors, or maybe through a canyon in the clouds big enough for an army corps to march through. What I want to make clear, however, is that we were taught to think of heaven as a place, and a place to be squeezed into or else to be left out; and when we were children and humble in mind, we felt that the chances were all against our ever getting in.

As for hell, that was a terrible thought to most of us. How the old preachers used to threaten us with it, yes, take us by the nape of the neck and hold us over the lake of fire! What shivers

and shudders we had in the dark as we thought over our childish misdeeds of the day. The Bible was interpreted literally for us by our parents, Sunday school teachers, and ministers. My brother and I used to fight and call each other all the hard names we could lay our tongues to, except one; we never called each other a fool, because mother told us the Bible said if you say to your brother " thou fool " you will be in danger of hell-fire. Judgment day and the second coming of Christ, which was to precede judgment day, were to us terrible events that we looked for any minute and shivered to contemplate. There was mighty little chance for us, we were perfectly sure of that, because we were far from being model boys.

There is much of that old view left. You'd be surprised to see our radio mail, and the questions asked about heaven and hell, the apparent uneasiness and fear still left in many minds, and the evident impossibility of many people getting away from the absolute letter of scriptural passages. Maybe there was some pragmatic value in this old conception, just as there might be from a blacksnake whip or a threat of prison forever held over some people's heads as a deterrent from wrong-doing. Some years ago I cast some doubts in public utterance on a literal hell and

lake of fire. An influential Negro preacher announced that he was going to reply to my words, and several men from our church went to hear him that Sunday night. Among other things he said, " That kind of doctrine may do all right for the white folks up there on the boulevards, but if I preached that-a-way, those same white folks wouldn't have no clothes on their lines nor chickens in their coops." Such fear of punishment may have weight in keeping things as they are, with white folks on top, parents in the saddle riding their children, the powers that be sitting tight in the seats of the mighty and subduing mind, soul and body of all the common people; but fear never made character, never turned anybody from wickedness, hatred, and envy to goodness, love, and toleration. There is all too much fear in this poor old world at the best, fear of pain, fear of poverty, fear of losing one's job, fear of sickness, fear of death, fear of a thousand and one things that stalk through the shadows of life. Fear may be wholesome in keeping us from thrusting hands into the fire, but it is wholesome for nothing else that I can think of. The more we can get rid of fears, the richer and rounder shall be human life; and it seems to me the evident obligation of every preacher to disabuse the minds of as many people as he can of all forms

of fear and to place instead of them, as a motive for good conduct and fine living, the principles of love, of sweetness and of light.

The objection at once is urged that if you take away a literal heaven and hell, there will be no spur to right conduct. There are many schools, however, in which there is no system of rewards and punishments; the pupils learn for the love of learning. Indeed, nobody ever really learns for any other reason. An artist paints pictures for the love of the art; writers create literature because they are driven to it, willy-nilly, because they can't help it. Milton got only a pound or two for "Paradise Lost." Men are upright, honest, kindly, and serviceable in business, not because they're afraid of punishment, and not for reward; but because they are built that way. Living is a fine art, and art is its own reward.

As a matter of fact, I don't believe our parents, teachers, and ministers of a generation ago really believed in hell at all; they only found it a convenient thumb-screw to put upon us children, to make us do what they wanted us to do. If they had really believed in it, they couldn't have slept of nights on account of their anxiety about themselves and about those they loved. Do you suppose for one minute I could go about smiling and happy if I had even the shadow of a dread

that one of my sons might be in danger of hell-fire? You couldn't catch me as I ran out of this place to take the first train to where those boys are. No sir, nobody ever believed in a real literal hell for himself and his own boys, but only for somebody else and somebody else's boys. People have tried hard to believe it, and believed they believed it, but in reality it was too much for them to swallow.

The reason for the literal view of a physical heaven and a physical hell lies in the doctrine of the infallible Scriptures. This oriental library, spoken and written by oriental men, fell into the hands of us literal westerners, practical and exact, and we stripped it of all its imagery, its figures of speech, and its beauty of symbolism, to turn it into a set of statutes, a sourcebook of law. Many people still so regard it, and to them these words will mean little. They and I cannot reason together, since we have no common ground on which to stand. They will come to me, saying, "Why, doesn't the Bible say so and so? What are you going to do with this text or that text?" My answer is, "Makes no difference to me about this symbolism of the Bible. I'm not going to do anything with this text or that text. I'm going to take the Bible as a whole, the spirit of it, the orientalism of it, and especially the clear, strong

statement in it that God is love." I cannot get anywhere in arguing with those who take the Bible as an infallible source for legal statutes. The proof-text method is no longer convincing to this age and must be thrown away before we can make headway in understanding the real spirit of our Bible and of our religion. Nobody takes the symbolism of Bernard Shaw or of Ibsen for a legal statement, but tries to catch the spirit which these two great masters of symbolism are trying to present. Neither should we take the Bible as a bundle of legal statutes. I am not saying that Shaw and Ibsen, or Shakespeare and Milton, are of the same value as the important parts of the Bible. I don't believe that at all; but what I am trying to say is that you've got to read all writings with the same method of literary interpretation, or you won't catch the spirit of any of them.

What, then, is the real philosophy, yes, and the real science, as far as we have light on this matter, of future rewards and punishments? In thinking about it, we've got to start with unyielding belief in the goodness of God, in the purpose back of this world, and in the progress toward the fulfilment of some good end held in the Creator's mind. I think that is common ground for most of us. If then, God is good, or, as the Bible, particularly

the New Testament, would show us from beginning to end, God is love, then he would not inflict unnecessary and vindictive suffering upon any creature he has made. If he did, he wouldn't be good, not even as good as you and I are, and he wouldn't be love; therefore, he wouldn't be God.

That there is heaven and hell right here and now, there can be no possible doubt. Sometimes heaven comes as a reward of our own goodness and wisdom, industry and foresight, but sometimes it comes without any particular virtue on our part. On the other hand, sometimes we plunge ourselves into hell right here on this earth through foolishness, and ignorance, and wilfulness; but almost as often we have to endure hell through no fault of our own. As to the continuation of these states beyond the term of mortal life, no one of us can be certain; but of this one thing we can be absolutely sure, that our God, who is love, will not permit pain and anguish to endure any longer than he absolutely has to do. We cannot understand the evil that is in this world. Its presence is an insoluble problem. But we are driven by the logic of our philosophy to the conclusion that somehow what evil there is, is necessary; that God is limited by the nature of the materials with which he has to work, the circumstances which surround his creation, the

very freedom of the will which, to a degree at least, he has imparted to us, or for other reasons which are beyond our limited ken. I see no escape from that conclusion.

Difficult as it is to understand, I am none the less firmly convinced that the pains we have to bear, the heartaches and the disappointments, the losses and the sorrows, our Father would spare us if he could. The major portion of life is good, comfortable, happy. No one of us, if asked the question "Are you happy?" would be likely to answer quickly and sincerely with an unqualified "Yes." Nevertheless, most of the time we really are, even without knowing it. If we are not in actual physical pain — and sometimes even when we are — there is an interest in life, a tang and a zest, for us all. Now and then every one of us has to go down into the shadow, to the very bottom of the valley, and with streaming eyes, it may be, certainly with quaking hearts and even breaking hearts; we feel that we are near the end of our row; we simply cannot go on. Yet somehow, if we just keep a tight enough grip on ourselves, and grit our teeth for awhile, we emerge, if not into the full sunlight, at least into the gray dawn; and we may be confident that if we just hold on a little longer the sun itself will finally shine.

Of course there is hell in this world, some of

our own making and some not. I heard an old doctor say one time, "No man can play hell all his life and hope to be in heaven in his old age." Even I would rescue everybody I could from the consequences of his own acts, if by so doing I wouldn't have to injure humanity at large or endanger other people. God, who is a whole lot better than I am, would do the same thing, and finally will do the same thing, and that just as quickly as he can. There is a whole lot of heaven in this world, too, and we don't have to wait for eternity to find it. Home is heaven, if it is even a half-way home. Friends are heaven. The outdoors, either in sun or storm, in city or country, is heaven to him who has eyes to see it. Heaven is all around us, not only in our infancy, but also in our age. Work is heaven. Anybody absorbed in a task, with pride in the thing he has to do, developing his skill all the time with hand or brain, is in heaven, and you cannot drive him out unless you take his work away from him. Making shoes, mending umbrellas, keeping books, anything and everything of human activity in which we can, as we say, lose ourselves, is heaven.

What we pray for and long for with all the power of our natures, if we are wise and loving, is that new earth that has been so neglected in our thought about these things. We yearn for a

new earth in which love and kindness and brotherhood are the dominant music; in which every man and every woman has a piece of work which is a little bit of heaven; in which all human relationships are shot through and glorified with the spirit of love and service and kindness. We would see all walls and partitions broken down, all lines between class and class abolished, nobody snubbing anybody or high-hatting anybody or treating anybody with coldness and aloofness and pride. No employer grinding the faces of his employees, refusing to speak to them in the aisles of the office or the shop, and no employee hating his manager or his employer and ready, if it were safe, to use violence to get the upper hand. A new earth in which cooperation should prevail and not a mad race for advantage, financial, social, or of any other sort, to turn earth into hell.

I am, therefore, with all my heart — and I'm only speaking the current thought of our time — a universalist. I believe that all men are worth saving, redeeming, glorifying; and more than that, I believe that God will finally save, redeem and glorify every one of them. God may be checked, but he can never be defeated. What he sets out to do, that he can and will do. This is the way I think of it: truth is eternal and falsehood is temporal; right is eternal and wrong is limited and finite; goodness and love are eternal,

and wickedness and hate are limited and evanescent. A time must come, therefore, in which truth shall prevail and falsehood be done away, right must stand and wrong must fall, and goodness and love irradiate all the atmosphere of a redeemed and glorified new heaven and new earth.

When this will be, how far in the future, God knows, and God alone. We can safely leave it with him. Our hearts at times are sick with hope deferred. We see so much of imperfection in ourselves and in our environment that we can hardly see, through the mists about us, our little path ahead; but if God is as good as Jesus says he is, if the compassionate Christ is a picture of God — and he is — then we may be well assured that the future, whatever it is, cannot be anything but good. Personal immortality, beyond the hour of departure from this visible word, Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms is to be our portion. It cannot be anything but good. We shall enter into a state, not necessarily a place, difficult as that is to conceive, even as General Booth entered into heaven, and kneeling by the curb we shall see our Master come forth with his hands outstretched to bless us and to welcome us to a life of unending good. This is a simple faith after all, but founded upon sound reason, upon good science and philosophy, and best of all buttressed with the word of the everlasting Christ.

God and the Son of Man

Jesus one time said: " Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Some would translate this passage, " Believe in God, believe also in me " — both verbs in the imperative mood. I think, however, it should stand as it is; nevertheless, it is immaterial; the meaning of the passage is the same in either case. What Jesus intends to convey is that we should give unrestricted freedom to our natural and inevitable and incurable belief in God; that we should not try to crush it out, nor allow passing moods or emergencies to dim its lustre; and that while we are believing in God we should naturally also believe in his son, the Son of Man. In other words, these two " believes " of Jesus would sum up for us an adequate philosophy, an adequate faith. These two " believes " look upward and look outward. You might say, one is transcendant and the other immanent. One is a belief in life, its purpose, its intelligibility, its plan, which we call belief in God; the other may be said to be belief in humanity, its possibilities, its values, its essence as a part — a very important, vital part — of the divine.

Whether Jesus says "Believe in God" or "You believe in God" — imperative or indicative mood — comes to the same thing. Whether we know it or not, we are all confirmed believers, or we wouldn't act the way we do. We may claim to be skeptic, agnostic, and even now and then actually atheistic; but actions speak louder than words and we all act as though we believed in the plan, the purpose, the order, and the end of this often seemingly chaotic world in which we live. We believe in life, we cling to it, we plan for it, we expect it to go somewhere, to reach a goal, to meet a fruition. There are times in our lives, I know, days filled with misfortunes or perplexities, when we cry out that there is no God, there is no plan, there is nothing but chaos and cruelty, darkness and loneliness and pain; but these are passing phases, and for the most part we do not live according to such a chaos of belief.

"There is no unbelief;
For this by day and night unconsciously
The heart lives by the faith the lips deny.
God knoweth why."

Everyone who plows the ground, plants seed, awaits rain and sunshine to bring the harvest and the fruitage, is giving active demonstration of his belief in law and in beauty. I travel much in the

country. I have seen in the spring the furrowed fields, with the corn just beginning to appear above the clod, the wheat that has passed under the snows of winter, and the oats, sometimes knee-high already, awaiting the harvest now so close at hand. The farmers who planted the seed for this crop cannot be unbelievers. Summer and winter, seed time and harvest have passed over their heads so many times that they are firmly set in their faith that these will recur. Last May I saw young life all over the farms. I saw white leghorns dotting the landscape like petals fallen from huge fruit trees, the broods already half grown; and I knew that careful housewives had prepared for the coming of the spring and its resurgence of life and beauty. I saw litters of little red pigs, like bologna sausages; calves wabbly and stiff-legged, jumping up and down in one place or awkwardly and aimlessly gamboling about for the sheer joy of living. I saw little colts, long legged and gangling, trotting about the pastures by the sides of their big, patient, grazing mothers. I saw a mule colt, with a body about as big as a hobby horse and legs as long as they will ever get to be. Life was everywhere, boiling up from the source, guided and controlled and directed by the intelligence of man. You can't tell me that these farming men and women

are unbelievers in life, in its plan and purpose, in its directing power which we call God.

"There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod —
He trusts in God."

Everyone of us who draws his belt tighter, thrusts out his jaw, and declares to himself, "Things will be better by and by. I shall be better tomorrow," gives unconscious testimony to his faith in life, his faith in God. Today may be very dark; misfortune may dominate it; pain may reign like a tyrant in it; circumstances may take us by the nape of the neck and shake us helplessly to and fro as a cat worries a mouse; loneliness, sadness, depression, and despondency may darken the day and shut out all the light except that gleam along the horizon, that undying and indomitable hope which tells us the sun is going to break through the leaden curtain of the sky. "Things will go better tomorrow. I shall be better tomorrow. The world will be more orderly tomorrow. This bitter pain will pass away. My body and my heart will heal and I shall be strong again, happy again, effective again" — this is the constant song of humanity, a song of broken interludes, of minor strains, but nevertheless an

all but universal song. Utter despair is the rarest thing among mankind; and the victim of it shoots himself, takes poison, or throws himself off a cliff or a bridge. The endurance to the end of almost all human beings is in itself testimony to belief in life, which is another name for belief in God.

We have been accustomed to say that anticipation is a mark of youth alone, that the young must always have something to look forward to; but the same thing characterizes maturity, almost if not quite as much. The fisherman is always saying to himself or to his comrades, "That pool just ahead is better than this; that ripple, or that other lake." He is constantly looking ahead to better waters just around the turn. The same is true of hunters, investors, engineers, and promoters. "It is better just a little further on" — that is the everlasting cry and the indomitable thought of this remarkable creature, man. "I must have something to look forward to" — that is his breath of life, the food by which his soul lives, the mark that distinguishes him from brute contentment, the assurance that he partakes of the divine. Universal anticipation is universal faith in life, which is faith in God.

"There is no unbelief;
Whoever says beneath the sky,

'Be patient, heart; light breaketh by and by,'
Trusts the Most High."

Every time we lie down to sleep, willingly surrender our consciousness and our watchfulness, we throw ourselves as a child upon the breast of its mother, into the arms of the ever wakeful and eternal Father. My good friend, Clarence Darrow, recently said that we court sleep as a boon, that unconsciousness is so much better than consciousness and that anything is desirable which gives us escape from life; but I find many, many people, aside from little children and the very young, who grudge the amount of time they have to give to sleep. Scholars, research hounds grudge it, business men grudge it, artists and musicians would often reduce it to the smallest necessary time, homemakers and mothers grudge it. The mere fact that so heavy a majority of humanity desires not less but more of consciousness is testimony to their belief in life and their joy in being and acting. Often they do not seek sleep until they have to, sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care, balm of life's wounds, the death of this world's life. Do you think we would dare to sleep unless we believed in life and our awakening? If we had not an unconscious confidence that the arms of the Everlasting would be round about us in our sleep, would guard and protect us

and bring us to the light of another day, we would wait and watch and walk till we dropped in our tracks, instinctively to guard life which we hold so dear. It is our very belief in life, in the order of it all, its regularity, its plan and its reign of law, which enables us to sleep trustfully and assured. Faith in life, faith in God.

> "There is no unbelief;
> Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
> Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
> Knows God will keep."

The attempt to make things beautiful all round us and ourselves as beautiful as may be in our environment, is another unconscious testimony to our belief in life. All over our cities, in the spring, paint brushes are busy, houses are freshened, gardens are made, flowers are planted and are blooming, houses are swept and washed and cleaned inside and out. We regard him as a poor citizen who does not believe in making his city just as beautiful as it can be made. He is niggardly if he withholds his hand from dressing up his own property; he is unpatriotic if he does not lend a hand to all effort for the city beautiful. The same thing is true of every farmer and every villager across the land. We are lovers of beauty and we want to help mother nature to make our

homes and neighborhoods more and more fair. We are unhappy ourselves, and we do not respect ourselves, unless we are clean, well groomed, dressed up in a manner befitting our place and time. British army regulations required every Tommy to shave every morning, no matter where he was, in camp or in trench, whether he had water or mud to shave in, for the sake of his morale. One day a young chap said to me, "When I'm down in spirits, the only way to get up is either to go out and get drunk or else put on dress clothes." He did not really mean the first. He did not know that he was giving expression in the second to the unquenchable desire for beauty, to the everlasting Greek in his unconscious nature. Either Bacchus or Apollo! It is with a thrill of joy that every now and then I learn again how the masses of the people love the beautiful, in music, in poetry and song, in painting and architecture and nature. One evening a dear lady said to me, after hearing the poetry of Vachel Lindsay, "Many of the people could not understand that; but I could, because I have been through so much in my life." Almost the finest thing that was ever said of Jesus, that great poet and seer and lover of beauty, was that the common people heard him gladly.

We could not bear to stand and look upon the

closed eyes of our best beloved in their last long sleep, if we did not believe in life, life unending, everlasting, destined for high purpose and an eternal aim. It is hard enough, as it is, to say goodbye, and it were absolutely unbearable if it were not for the faith, conscious or unconscious, that some day, somewhere we should say good-morning as we meet again. Oftentimes we think we do not believe in everlasting life; but that is before our own best beloved have gone out from us into the unknown. Let the wing of the dark angel touch our own homes and our own dearest, and immediately our hearts cry out, "I believe; help my unbelief." It is simply impossible in such moments; and if we only knew it, it is impossible all the time, to rest in unbelief, in the distressing hopelessness that this beautiful thing we call vital force can have an end. We are not unbelievers. We are confident of continuance. Our actions belie our words when we get up and front another day after what is most precious to us in this world has passed beyond our reach. We are unconscious believers in the conservation of vital force, we are believers in life, which means believers in God.

"There is no unbelief;
The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,

And dares to live when life has only woes,
God's comfort knows."

Now Jesus assumes all that. He knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves. He says, "You believe in God, now believe also in me." His favorite name for himself was "the Son of Man." He wants us, then, to believe not only in God but in man — ourselves and our fellow men. He himself is the arch type of man, Son of God, Son of Man, linking the two together with a tie that cannot be broken. Every man is a son of man and a son of God. He wants us to put a just estimate upon the value of human life, upon its meaning, its purpose, and its sacred inviolability. We look at other human beings with depreciation and even with contempt, and that, too, when they are least contemptible. Remember the crude and filthy and profane drain-man in "The Servant in the House." I think it would be better for most of us if we, too, did more manual labor, than so much work with our so-called brains. For myself, I'd love to be a bus driver on one of the lines between St. Louis and Jefferson City or Des Moines and St. Paul, or a taxi driver. I'd love to front all weathers, meet all obstacles, buck all circumstances. I believe that much in humanity, in myself, in the Son of Man. Man is

a constant source of wonder, a strange indomitable animal. Handicapped, broken, hedged in on every side by cruel and perplexing circumstances, he drives ahead, he gets somewhere, he does the unexpected and unbelievable, and not one man here and there, but thousands of them everywhere. You can scarcely believe his endurance, his inventiveness, his stern and stubborn will. What a piece of work is a man! Jesus wants us to believe in him, to wonder at him, to admire and to love him. When he is unlovely, as he often is, be assured it is due to some obscure cause that you and I know nothing about. If we did know, we could understand and believe in him. Environment is so powerful in its effect upon him, stubborn as he is. He is so driven by circumstances and by forces over which he has no control that his margin of free will is often extremely narrow. The old French proverb is a wise and a kindly one, " To know all is to forgive all."

To believe in ourselves and in our fellow men is, I think, what Jesus means when he exhorts us to believe in him, the Son of Man. The logic of such a belief is a long, long logic. It leads to all kinds of gentleness and kindness, self-sacrifice and helpfulness, bravery and perseverance, sympathy and philanthropy. If you believe in the

Son of Man, you will go with him a mile, yes, two miles on his way, for guidance and companionship. If you believe in the Son of Man you will share and share with him your coat and your overcoat, too. If you believe in the Son of Man, you will wash his feet in oriental lands and extend him similar courtesy and hospitality of a different sort in all western lands. If you believe in the Son of Man, you will be born again. You will not recognize yourself and your friends will not recognize you. They will say, "What has come over him? How he has softened! He has no longer the biting tongue, no longer the itching palm, no longer the cruel and exploiting self-assertion, no longer the self-indulgent absorption of everything round about him that he can appropriate as his own. What a change has come over the spirit of his dreams. He is a new man, made over, so much bigger, so much finer, so much more lovable." This, I think, is what Jesus means and what he wants — that, believing as we do and as we can't help but do in life, that is, in God, we should believe also in him, the Son of Man and Son of God, which means in ourselves and in one another.

Adventuring Joyously

I was greatly struck with a passage in the little volume, "Our Asiatic Christ," by Oscar M. Buck: "India has remembered what we have too soon forgotten: that only a message of joy can catch the hearing and the hearts of men. To that which is less than joy, men pay no heed. He alone who has good tidings on his lips will men hear gladly, whether it be in the Ganges valley or on the hills of Galilee."

We have a message of joy which I fear we have turned into a message of sadness and solemnity. That message is called a "gospel," which means good news, glad news, joyful news; and instead of declaring it as such, I am afraid we have too long declared it as a depressing and repressing message. The heavenly voices sang at the very birth of Jesus, "Behold we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Perhaps that is one reason why we have been so slow in capturing the East for Christ. India has been sad enough under her own religions and has yearned deeply for what she calls *ananda,* or joy, a philosophy and a state of mind, of peace and calm and happiness, with

which to confront this world. Now she is finding out for herself that Jesus is a joyful person and that the story of him is indeed good news. It is really a matter of only the last five or six years that India has made this discovery. The intellectual classes, the most studious and thoughtful people of that great nation, are studying Christ, talking about Christ, and worshiping Christ by hundreds of thousands. They have not adopted Christianity, which they call " churchianity," but they have adopted Christ; and the thing they see in him most, is the joy in him and the joy that he gives, the *ananda.*

Perhaps there is something in this strangely interesting movement in the East for us here in the West. If the church is slipping in America, as we so often hear it is; if people are deserting it for parks and picture shows and automobiles, as we so often hear they are; then maybe the reason is that we are offering stones for bread and scorpions for fishes, sadness and melancholy instead of joy. I often hear people say, " I have quit going to my church because it makes me so depressed," or, " because there is nothing there to interest me." I know of some people who were formerly regular attendants at church, but who now seldom, if ever, go and do not hesitate to say that it is the lugubrious and forbidding coun-

tenance of the minister, who seems never to dare to smile, that keeps them away. The man has a false conception of Jesus who is made sad by being his messenger, and a false conception of Christian propriety who thinks that the decorous thing is to put on a granite puritan face when carrying out his ministrations in or out of the church. Nor are ministers alone in this error; officials and leaders among the laity have turned the Christian life which ought to be a life of joy into a solemn and forbidding thing.

One of the leading laymen of my city, I am told, criticized me in the following words: "He preaches what the people want to hear and not what they ought to hear; that's the reason why he has such great crowds." I never had better praise in my life. That is exactly what they said about the Master, Jesus; and I wish it were only half true of myself. "The common people heard him gladly." Yes, sir, he gave them good news; he told them what they wanted to hear, and that was exactly what they ought to hear. His first word was, "I bring you good tidings, a joyful message, of the kingdom of God, the community of God, the beloved and happy community"; and just about his last word was, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

Melancholia, depression, over-solemnity, taking ourselves over-seriously, is all a travesty on the Christian religion and is not at all a true interpretation of it. The other day I read this word of Frances Willard, "The chief wonder of my life is that I dare to have so good a time, physically, mentally, and religiously." Why in the mischief should it be such a wonder? Just because she was brought up to believe that to have a good time while engaged in strictly religious work was somehow not the thing to do. Whoever heard of a more beautiful and more Christlike life and personality than that of Frances Willard? Why shouldn't it be full of good times, joy, happiness, physically and mentally and religiously? I use the phrase "why in the mischief" purposely; because it is mischief, and nothing less than mischief, to put a different interpretation upon this good news, this happy gospel of Jesus. Principal L. P. Jacks has thrilled the Christian world with his plea to restore the lost radiance of the Christian religion. Radiance is the right word. The Christian religion is *ananda,* joy, radiance, glad tidings of good things that shall be to all people; and when we make it sad and heavy and lugubrious, we are simply presenting a false picture of Jesus. When we learn to restore that lost radiance we

shall light the world with it East and West; and that is exactly what the East is doing for itself and is going to teach us.

That good news is first of all the mere joy of living in this world. Just to breathe, just to eat and drink, just to walk about and run about, just to work and to play, just to talk and to think, just to see all the beauty spread round us, the lavish color on the green background, just to listen to the music in earth and air and sea, that is what Jesus did and called us to do. Asceticism? Yes, he was an ascetic, but not of the sorrowful kind and not of the kind that withdraws from men and women and the beautiful world. On the contrary, his asceticism was one of deep appreciation of everything true and beautiful, from the flowers that starred the plain of Esdraelon to the beauty of young life dancing at a marriage feast or old wisdom moving in and out of the temple area. He loved life and he loved people. The other day I heard somebody say, "I have a sort of contempt for all the people that surge round me in cars and public places." That's the wrong slant on life; it's not the Jesus slant, not by a long shot. There was never any contempt for any human being, however forbidding in outward appearance, however ignorant or uncouth. Just the opposite. He could see beneath the exterior,

and he liked to be with men and women, all kinds of them. That is joy. Contempt is sorrow. Simple enjoyment, the enjoyment of simple things, this is the Jesus spirit. Henry David Thoreau manifested it when he went to live alone at Walden Pond. Our dependence on things destroys it. Unless we are very careful, things become our master.

Then there is the joy of adventure, even danger. Jesus did not live safely; he lived dangerously. I admire these flyers who take their lives in their hands to pioneer, to blaze a way through the unknown paths of the sky. Suppose they die? What of it? Better die adventuring, in full health and strength than to rot away in sadness and decrepitude. I don't object to war merely because it kills people; I object to it because it makes people hate; takes, for so many, the gentleness and the sweetness and the beauty out of life. Those who die in it are the blessed ones, throwing their merry lives away in youth and in joyousness. I rather envy them and feel like saying to them:

> "God rest you, happy gentlemen,
> Who laid your good lives down,
> Who took the khaki and the gun
> Instead of cap and gown.

God bring you to a fairer place
Than even Oxford town."

The other evening a young boy not quite seventeen piled over my back fence just as I was going out to get my motor car. He had a knapsack on his back; and I thought he was a Boy Scout inspecting back yards, especially when he pulled out a paper to show me. But the paper proved to be a note from his father, an old friend in Tulsa, telling that this boy had tramped to Long Beach and back, and was now on his way to Miami and return, when he intended to enlist, on his seventeenth birthday in July, in the navy. He hadn't a red cent, and hadn't eaten all day; but he was a happy boy, adventuring. That's life. That's the Christian life. Jesus tramped, and went all day without eating, and slept under the stars. That is joy.

There is, furthermore, the joy of youth. Jesus was young, and his gospel, his good news, is meant as much for youth as for maturity. In fact he said his kingdom, his beloved community, should be made up of the very young in spirit, docile in mind, inquiring, full of confidence and faith in life and in the world. He never spoke a "Thou shalt not" in all the three years of his teaching. His asceticism was not of the do-less

type, but of the doing type. It goes without saying that his philosophy of life had no place for the wild and the riotous type of joy, so called, that destroys life instead of fostering it. Of course he would have no patience with the laughter of fools, which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The hectic gaiety, drunken and lewd, forced and artificial, such as too often characterizes humanity in its foolish moments, is not the kind of joy that Jesus comes bringing into the world. You can't break the laws of nature; they only break you. To violate the laws of sane and wholesome living is simply to butt your brains out against a stone wall. There is no joy in that. His whole spirit, however, is very far from a negative attitude toward life. He is not, like us, forever saying "don't" to the young just because we have authority to say it. On the contrary he knows that the only way for youth to learn the true philosophy of life is by personal experimentation, with such little guidance as those who have traveled over the road before are able to impart. He puts the seal of his approval upon youth, just because it is young, and inspires it to go joyfully on its happy way.

Most of us have never found out the things in which he got the most joy and from which he

shows we can get the most. For instance, that very last night on which he said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you," he took a basin and a towel and washed the feet of every man in the room, including Judas Iscariot. Can you beat that? He got joy out of it. It was his happiness, and he tried to make them see that that same road of courtesy and kindness to everybody about us, even enemies, is the highest joy in this old world. Love and service are the most powerful weapons on earth. They break the heart of hostility; they take the nerve out of opposition; they win their results inevitably against all kinds of odds. Is there any joy equal in this life to the joy of seeing obstacles melt away under the fervent heat of love? No wonder he declared that he who would save his life must throw it away, and whoever treasured and hugged his life as the most precious thing in his possession, must inevitably lose it. Joy comes to those who love and serve much more than to those who are loved and are served; and there is no such path of sadness as the loveless path and the path of querulous and constant demand for service from other people.

Another thing we have yet to learn is the joy of giving, not only ourselves and our service,

even life itself upon occasion, but also the giving of the little things that we have amassed and hoarded. Strange that it should be so hard for us to see the joy that there is in giving away what we've got. Not long since a young woman visited at our house and met a good many people. Every time any one admired something she had she immediately gave it away. She left here with a much depleted wardrobe. You can't tell me that that young woman is not starting out for a joyous life. It shines already in her face. Such generosity brings far more joy to the giver than to the recipient. Believe it or not, it is far more blessed to give than to receive. Oh, I know we have to keep back enough to buy whole-wheat bread and meat and potatoes, and to dress as neatly and cleanly as we can; but all the rest of it, if we'd give it away, we'd be far happier than we are now, when we are constantly comparing what we have with what other people have. What's the joy in that? On the contrary, that more than anything else takes the joy out of life. It's the most fruitful cause of unhappiness in all our western world, splits up more marriages, engenders more hatred, and leads to more direful results socially, politically, and in all our relationships. Nevertheless, I don't know any more difficult job than to try to convince American

people of the truth of what I am saying right now. If Jesus hasn't succeeded in two thousand years in convincing many of us, how is any one of us going to succeed in convincing another by talking or writing a few words? It is the simple truth, just the same, that if every one of us should give away even one-tenth of the mere things that he gathers together in a year's time, we'd have the most radiantly happy society, as well as the one with the least amount of envy, friction, pulling and hauling, mean remarks or actions; and more than that, we'd burst out the walls of our churches with the crowds that would want to come to these joyous places and with the numbers that would want to join these happy churches. It's too much to expect, though; our faith is not even as a grain of mustard seed. Maybe that's the trouble.

I have already anticipated the final and the highest joy, the joy of loving. Paul sings it in such glorious strains that Henry Drummond is induced to call it the greatest thing in the world. Paul lists it as the first fruit of the spirit, and immediately follows it with joy as the next. The joy is the logical consequence of the love. Nothing in this world lights up a face like love, any kind of love, mother love, father love, marital love, young sweethearts' love, the true philanthro-

pist's love; by all odds, the greatest thing in the world, joy unconfined.

This, then, is the radiant message, the good news, the gospel which our Master came to bring to the world East and West. Nothing sad about it, nothing lugubrious, nothing melancholy. Solemn at times, yes, for joy can be so great as to be overwhelmingly solemn, as when you look into the sunset, or the moonlight on a green field at the edge of a forest, or the mountain canyons in their silence and majesty; but not sad because solemn; on the contrary, solemn because so full of joy. Even tears come. Jesus wants us to know the mere joy of living, of adventuring — the very dangers of life, the joy of youth lasting into maturity and age, the joy of helping one another over rough spots in the road, the joy of giving away gladly what we have that another has not, and above all the supernal joy of loving all things both great and small; joy so great that we cannot keep still about it but have to go, and send, and tell everybody that we can about our source of such high happiness.

Three Gods in One

I cannot hope to say more than one or two things about this subject and the way the modern world looks at it.

There are certain numbers which seem to be favorites of the human mind — like three, seven, and twelve. Perhaps this is but a Hebrew inheritance, or perhaps it is handed down still further from nomad ancestors who spent their nights out under the stars. Possibly the number three became a favorite because of the three intense stars in the belt of Orion, and the number seven because of the seven stars — it is seven, isn't it?—in Ursa Major, the big dipper. I don't know why twelve should have appealed to the ancient mind unless it was because Jacob happened to have twelve sons and so there came to be twelve tribes, and then twelve apostles. Anyway, whatever the cause, these numbers have a sort of charm for most of us. Any writer is glad, consciously or unconsciously, when his subject falls into three parts. Maybe this is the reason that, for two thousand years, at least, the Christian world has thought of its God in three ways, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are

not alone in this; other religions have done the same.

To my own mind, the Trinity has always been merely three ways of thinking about God, and trying, vainly it may be, to imagine him; or three ways of his manifestation of himself to the human mind. I am aware that this three-manifestation idea was condemned as a heresy in the early centuries, as set forth by a teacher named Sabellius, and therefore termed the Sabellian heresy; but I can't help that. If my mind will not work any other way, heresy or no heresy, that's the way it will have to work; and I am sure that many other minds besides mine run in the same channel. We use the apostolic benediction, which St. Paul used in bidding farewell to his Corinthian friends, to this day, whatever our views concerning the triune God. Practically all churches use it, including the Unitarian, for I have heard Prof. Francis G. Peabody, as well as many other Unitarian leaders, close a service by invoking upon all the people the blessing of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This age has somewhat got away from thinking of God as a big man, old, with a long, gray beard, sitting somewhere up in the sky, on a dome, and looking down at this little world, and with a huge microscope perhaps, watching us crawl about

upon the surface of it. We have diffused God, scattered him, impersonalized him, you might say, resolved him into a nebulous force, a power; a person, to be sure, but intangible and impossible to visualize, to imagine, let alone to know. We recognize this impossibility and realize that we are worse off, or no better off, than the ancients, one of whom cried out, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" I don't know of anything that this age is more concerned about, and more anxious for light upon, than this inaccessible and incomprehensible person we call God. Earnestly we are asking ourselves, "Is he good? All good? If so, is he all powerful? And if so, why has he made things so imperfect, particularly human life, so full of distress, anxiety and perplexity?" We shall not soon answer those questions if we confine ourselves to groping and speculation concerning that intangible power which is back of the world. We would just as well give up before we start in, for our little minds evidently are not capable of grasping the Almighty and the Eternal. We would just as well agree with Herbert Spencer that he is the great Unknowable. Humanity has, however, not been able to throw up its hands and give up in its search for some understanding of God.

Humanity has been right, gropingly and stumblingly right, in calling him, now and then through the centuries, "Father." All through antiquity, and in all quarters of the globe, among people of all colors and tongues and races, here and there a saint or sage has lifted lame hands of faith, in the darkness of perplexity, to the Father above. The Hindus did; the Greeks did; the Mohammedans of the Near East did; and, above all others, Jesus did, and has taught two thousand years of Christians, myriads of men and women, to say, "Our Father." A child does not understand all that his father does. No matter how the father may labor to show himself to his child, he cannot do it. Many of his measures, his requirements, his injunctions, and his ways of dealing with the child seem utterly incomprehensible; and in the nature of the case it must always be so. In general, the child believes in the benevolence of the father, in the father's desire, at least, to deal fairly and rightly with his child; but the child cannot always know why he deals as he does, and must take much of him on faith. So it is with us more or less blind children of the heavenly Father. I know we cannot rest content with this state of affairs; the human mind is not satisfied to take everything on faith. That is the reason that this age of ours is so anxious for any ray of

light that may be cast upon the mysterious personality whom we call God.

It is of great value and importance, then, to us all that we can turn our misty and dizzy vision from the inaccessible and unknowable Father to the very real and concrete, visible and understandable Son. The second person of the so-called Trinity, the Son, is, it seems to this age, a manifestation of the Father. He himself says that he is; and his own assertion ought to carry great weight for us all. We have taken most that he said at its face value. More than that, increasingly we have adopted what he said as the basis of our social life. We have tested his words for two millenniums as nobody else's words have ever been tested, in the fiery furnace of human experience, and increasingly we have found them to fit all that is finest and best in human life. We find him declaring that he and his Father are one, that he does always not only what the Father would have him do, but what the Father himself would do. Flatly, he tells us that whoever has seen him has seen the Father, whoever has understood him has understood the Father. For my single self, then, the second person of the Trinity, the Son, seems the most important of the three, certainly the most comprehensible, — and I think this statement holds for most people in the Christian world,

which now amounts to a very heavy percentage of the population of the globe.

If we would understand whether God is benevolent or not, let us take a look at Christ. Was Jesus benevolent in dealing with the masses of the lost, strayed and stolen of his time? Did he breathe benevolence for all the lost, strayed and stolen of all time? To ask the question is to answer it. He was all benevolence, sympathy and understanding and love, not only for those whom he had seen in trouble and disaster, but also for all the myriads then unborn whom his quick imagination could see down the vista of the ages trooping onto the stage of this life, groping in their blindness, stumbling with their lameness, crying bitterly with their heartaches, their loneliness, their known and unknown tragedies. For all these his heart went out in a compassion which even this perplexed age has not failed to understand and to which it instantly responds. There is nobody who has ever lived upon the earth whom almost all our modern world understands so well and loves so profoundly as Jesus of Nazareth. That fact alone is enough to make him God, the manifestation of God, the picture of God, the image of God, very God of very God, as the old theologians of the early centuries used to put it. I don't care how you put it. You cannot put it

too strongly for me. The apex of the Christian religion is Christ.

Neither do the objections bother me at all that much said about Christ, even in the New Testament and certainly since the New Testament, is but idealization; that the bare historical facts of his birth, his teaching, his benevolence and helpfulness to all the distressed of his time, his crucifixion and death, have been taken as a base round which to weave the myths of his divinity. I don't believe that position, even in the face of Professor Case of Chicago. I believe there is as much scholarship, or more, for the conclusion that most of the epistles attributed to St. Paul are the product of the first century and of his own hand, including the hymn to love, which is the essence of Jesus' teaching; that the Acts of the Apostles was written in the middle of the same century; that the essential structure of the first three gospels themselves dates from a very few years after the death of Christ, as there is for the other view. But grant it all, for the moment, that our Christ of today is mostly idealization, an abstraction, none the less he is the best picture of God that we have ever had or that apparently we shall ever have. He has more influence in this world than any other being, any other force, any other school or dynasty or kingdom or power. Abstraction or

no abstraction, ideal or actual fact, myth or man, what he was, that God is. He is God manifest in human form, "very God of very God." That's enough for me.

This is not enough, however, for many other minds in this restless, dissatisfied, and yearning day. We must recognize a craving in our time not easily to be quenched, a thirst for God not to be allayed and assuaged even at this spring, which seems to me an all-sufficient fountain. In the closing chapter of J. A. Spender's "Life, Journalism and Politics," a chapter devoted to religion, I found a sentence which gave me pause and food for reflection. In substance he said, "This age might be called the age of the Holy Spirit. Men and women are hungrily searching for an interpretation and an understanding of God in terms of the spirit." It may be that this is true — I think it is true — and that many people are not altogether content with the concrete picture of the Christ as the end and the climax of their religion. They may not be satisfied, when they pray, to see the vision of him whom we call the Savior rising before their eyes; they may not be able in the moments of their agony and bloody sweat to see the White Comrade standing beside them in their No Man's Land. Theirs is the mystical type of religion,

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and they want immediate contact with the unseen, the unknowable, the all-powerful, the eternal, in short, the Father. Theirs, too, I am persuaded, is not a vain quest. They can have what they want; for the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God, which to me means the same thing, is certainly manifest in human life. He is not inaccessible to any craving heart of man.

There are evidences too strong to be gainsaid that throughout the centuries of human history there have been close contacts of individual souls of a high order direct with the unseen, and there is no conceivable reason why such contacts might not continue in time to come, even in this busy and complicated social life in which we now are engaged. There always have been, why should there not always be, saintly souls, mystical spirits, who have the gift of direct personal communion, without intermediary, with the spirit of God. Mysticism so called, this direct contact, may be and is looked at askance by some intensely practical minds; none the less, aside from the fact that many of us have known people who claimed such personal contact — and what right have we to contradict them? — we are learning enough about the unexplored realms of the human mind and soul to lead us to understand, whether we have ever had any such experience or not, the possi-

bility and even the probability that in the Dark Chamber of the soul, about which Tagore tells us, there may be interviews and intimacies between the mortal spirit and the immortal and eternal. Indeed I am not sure but that most of us, whether we knew it or not at the time, may have experienced moments when, in some great crisis of our lives, we have felt the invasion of that intangible power into the inmost recesses of our deeply tried or deeply stirred natures. More than that, I am inclined to believe that for such contacts, such moments of inspiration, a word that literally means the in-breathing and the indwelling of the spirit of God in the soul of a man, we ought all to try. Because we have not known God at first hand, but only at second hand, through Christ, is no reason we should not make the attempt, at least, to know him intimately and face to face. Maybe this is indeed one of the achievements yet to be attained in this age, on a large scale.

Certainly our time is hungry and thirsty for God. We may think we are not, and that we are concerned far more with this little success or that little place or comfort or luxury or opportunity; but I am sure that it is with us just as it was with the woman of Samaria, that we are thirsting after a kind of water that we did not consciously

come hither to draw. We are children who do not know what is the matter with us, children crying in the night, children crying for the light, with no language but a cry. What we really want is the hand of the heavenly Father. Call him God if you will, the first person of the Trinity, the All-Father; or what seems to me better, call him Christ, the concrete picture of God, the representative of the Father, our brother, the Son of Man, the man of joy or the man of sorrows acquainted with grief; or call him the Holy Spirit of God, working in the world to this day, touching the hearts of men with delicate intangible fingers, moving on the chaos of our time even as the spirit of God brooded on the chaotic surface of the waters at creation; call him what we please, just so we call him and seek him and find him; for he can be found.

When Prayer is Answered

It is not to be wondered at that most preachers hesitate to make sermons upon prayer. I have long shied away from it myself, and thought there must be something wrong with me on this account until I found that Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick had had the same experience. The best modern treatment of the subject that I know of is Miss Maude Royden's " Prayer As a Force," which I would suggest that anyone anxious for the best modern thought should read.

There is a rather widespread current belief that people have given up praying, because family prayers have just about ceased in this country, and prayer-meetings no longer have much vitality or vogue, and because even the habit of individually kneeling night or morning or both for definite prayer periods is on the wane. I do not believe, however, that just because certain forms of praying are going out it follows that prayer itself is on the decrease. Neither does it seem to me worth while to belabor people and insist upon the re-establishment of the family altar when conditions have so changed as to make the practice in the modern home difficult if not impossible.

Other forms of praying have in the history of the world come and gone and still prayer remained behind just as strong or stronger than ever. In some countries, prayer has been made by machinery, and no doubt religious leaders in those lands bewailed the increasing disuse of the prayer wheel. In others, prayer has been made with strings of beads and anybody who neglected to tell his rosary was likely to come in for a good deal of reprobation. Does it follow, because certain mechanical devices may be neglected, that prayer itself has disappeared? Such a conclusion would be just about as logical as the insistence that unless in the United States people should carry a prayer rug about with them and at certain hours of the day spread it down and kneel like the Mohammedans, with faces toward Mecca, prayer has gone into a decline.

Is it not true that prayer is a deeper thing than can be contained in any forms, attitudes of body, mechanisms of any kind, or any set form of word? The Jews might well bemoan the fact that so few of their number go to the wailing wall at Jerusalem, if that were the only place and the only way in which true prayer could be made. It seems to me useless, then, for us to bemoan the decay of the family altar and innocuous desuetude of the old-fashioned prayer-meeting. These

things are gone in urban America, and you might just as well give them up, regretfully it may be, but none the less irrevocably.

Everybody prays just the same. First or last, at some period in his life, some high point, whether of danger and disaster or of supreme happiness and exhilaration, everybody prays. In any moment of deep distress one calls out involuntarily, "My God!" or "God help me!" In any moment of deliverance and relief or in any sudden burst of joy one exclaims, "Thank God, thank God!" You can't help it any more than you can help breathing or stop your heart from beating. During the world war, when flying was so much more dangerous than it is today, a young aviator — my son, to be frank about it — told me that he got lost in the clouds one day and, utterly bewildered, did not know one direction from another nor up from down. He could not tell whether he was flying right side up or head downward. Suddenly he went into a spin and not knowing what else to do he began to pray. He grinned sheepishly as he told me about it and said, "I just prayed. Couldn't do anything else, and I sure prayed." I don't blame him — do you — and I don't wonder at him. It is the universal human experience.

Jesus says to us, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

First of all, then, prayer is asking. Sometimes we are told that true prayer, the highest form of prayer, does not ask for anything at all, but that it is simply a communion with God, keeping companionship with him, a sort of talking with him; but, as Miss Royden points out, this is to confuse the answer to prayer with prayer itself. Such a state of communion with the Father is the end of prayer, not the beginning. It is the thing sought, not the seeking. It is the open door, not the knocking. The asking for something desired is the very beginning of prayer, else why should Jesus advise us to pray for our daily bread? Anything one wants, then, is the legitimate object of prayer.

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
> Uttered or unexpressed."

The words of this old hymn form as good a definition of prayer as can be made. If it is right, then, to pray for our daily bread, it is also right to pray for our business ventures, to pray for our success in any kind of legitimate undertaking, to pray for prosperity, to pray for health.

Does it do any good to pray for the sick? It undoubtedly does. I have seen the scales tipped more than once between life and death by earnest prayers; and I have a friend in the ministry down

in Georgia who is skillful almost beyond belief in praying people out of the valley of the shadow. Physicians and nurses are well aware of the value and efficacy of such prayers in moments when the margin is very narrow between death and survival. Of course, they know, too, the danger of ill-considered efforts in this direction and how patients may sometimes be frightened by an injudicious prayer. There are times and seasons for all things and the skillful minister or visitor will not lug a prayer in at an inopportune moment. The very physicians and nurses themselves are often strengthened and nerved to a stronger fight by well-timed and well-spoken prayers.

Immediately the question comes to our curious minds, which often will not be still but insist upon debate, "Is not the effect of the prayer purely subjective, or psychological, upon the patient and even upon the nurse and doctor?" My answer is, I do not know. I do not think it is entirely so; but suppose we admit for the moment that this is true; isn't it worth while, after all? Does not the success justify the means? If there is a God, and if God is personal, a spirit, a soul, is it not conceivable that spirit may act powerfully upon spirit, person upon person? We know that it can, for we see such powerful action frequently going

on between two persons in our visible world. It is, therefore, not in the least unreasonable that such currents of magnetism may flow from the unseen and the all-powerful into the heart and the will of the human and the earthly.

Anyway, whatever our philosophy, the point I am trying to make is that in such supreme moments of our lives, yes and even along the humdrum paths of life, we can't help praying even if we want to, any more than we can keep our lungs from breathing or our hearts from beating. Prayer is as involuntary and often as unconscious as the circulation of the blood; for prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed. It is asking. And we are always asking.

"Uttered or unexpressed." It is not needful that prayer be put into words at all, far less that this or that bodily attitude shall be assumed to make the prayer real prayer. The yearning may be entirely unexpressed. It may be there is a nameless and unutterable yearning in the hearts of all who read these words. There are many such deep inexpressible desires which they cannot put into words and which reach down to the depths, even the unconscious depths, of their souls.

Here lies the value of public prayer. Not to be heard of men, not with vain repetition, not drift-

ing and thoughtless, but carefully considered as an attempt to express the deep desire of many fellow mortals who perhaps cannot express for themselves what is struggling in their inmost beings. People hunger and thirst for some voice, even though only partly understanding and sympathetic, to bring to utterance what they themselves, even to themselves and to the Father who sees in secret, are unable to put into words. It is a delicate task and one that can be fulfilled only out of a deep personal experience and a wide understanding of craving human hearts. The Book of Common Prayer is helpful, as are many other collected and printed prayers of the ages.

Then comes the next inevitable question, Does God change his will in answer to prayer? Does the action of any germ, any infection, any law of nature cease or change in answer to anyone's deep and sincere desire? I don't think so. I don't believe that typhoid can be prayed out of a poisoned well, nor tuberculosis out of poisoned milk, nor streptococci out of the air, set in motion by a sneeze from a very bad cold; but the sincere desire, yearning for and praying, will help in the eradication of these dangers, in the purification of the well, the milk supply, and, let us hope, some day in the segregation of people with bad colds. If we sincerely desire to be rid of these

dangers, we shall work as well as pray, shall use all the science that we can muster or can learn for the backing up of our own prayers.

Here we come to the second clause of Jesus in the text, quoted a moment ago, "Seek and ye shall find." Prayer is not simply passive but active. It seeks its own fulfillment. It goes after what it prays for. If one prays for his daily bread he will inevitably go out and work for it. If he sincerely desires prosperity, he will undergo the necessary exertion, the long hours, the self-denial and thrift, which will lead him to prosperity. In other words he will pay the price for the fulfilment of his desire. Many people think that their prayers are unanswered, because they are not willing to pay the price which is a condition to the answer. They pray for wealth, but are not willing to undertake the hard work necessary for amassing it. The employees of the J. P. Morgan company work from nine to five, and most of them with their eyes on the clock; but the members of the firm are sitting in their offices before the employees appear in the morning and their lights are burning long after darkness falls. Something took me at seven o'clock one morning into the office of perhaps the wealthiest man in this city. Nobody else was there except the big man himself. Immaculately

dressed, with a carnation in his buttonhole, he was going over a mass of papers on his desk. That's the price to be paid for great prosperity. Are you willing to pay it?

We pray for health, but are we willing to pay the price for health? For some, that means toilsome exercise, maybe a four-mile walk to the office in the mornings and home in the evenings. For others it means a careful regimen, the cutting off of this from the diet and the addition of that. Drinking and eating are like Saul and David. Drinking slays its thousands, and eating, its tens of thousands. Young girls starve themselves to try to look like moving picture actresses, with arms and legs like corn-stalks, when they ought to eat plenty of beef and potatoes to be rounded and fine like Greek statues. Middle-aged women on the other hand, whom nature intended to be comfortably and healthily fat, starve themselves, too, and even take reducing medicines until they are prematurely old and wrinkled. It's no good for these people to pray for health, while they destroy it as fast as they can. Pray for health, yes, but dare to undergo whatever is necessary to produce health, a surgical operation, if need be.

Somebody prays for leadership, a position of prominence and power, but is not willing to pay the price exacted. Leadership is lonely; the

greater it is the lonelier it is. It is daring, it steps out ahead to be shot at, as well as to be alone. Leadership is a servant, subject to the vacillating will of the many, often to the criticisms and the taunts of the short-minded and the narrow-minded; leadership often has to go where the crowd demands that it shall go and not at all where it wants to go. Do you desire leadership, sincerely and honestly, and at that price? If you do, you can have it.

We pray for spiritual blessings, but are we willing to pay the price? Humility, gentleness, dignity and sweetness of bearing, charm of personality — I take it these are spiritual blessings. And how are they come by? By unselfish service to other people in home, in shop, in office, every minute of the day from dawn till late dark. He who would be spiritually greatest among you, let him be servant of all. It's a heavy price and not many are willing to pay it. They yearn to be beautiful in character, tranquil in soul, charming and radiant and bright, but they can never get there unless they pay the price — servant of all!

" Knock and it shall be opened unto you." This implies that there is somebody on the other side of the door, that there is an ear to hear, and that if the knocking is persistent enough, the door will open. Already I have anticipated somewhat this

third assurance of Jesus, that the Father is on the other side of the door, and that he listens for our knock. This answers the question whether God hears and answers prayer. Undoubtedly, if he is God at all; and undoubtedly if he is Father at all, he answers, and he opens the door. He may not do it at the time we think he should, and when he has opened it we may not see in there what we expected to see. The scene within may be quite different from what we sincerely desired and came seeking for and knocking to have opened to us. Like any father, he knows already what we have need of and he will not give us stones for bread nor scorpions for fish, however much we beg for them.

Here enters in that other phrase of the model prayer, "Thy will be done." The finest exhibition of praying that this world knows anything about is that given by Jesus himself when in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed alone, ready to pay the price for leadership and yet dreading that price, the loneliness, the contumely, the ignominy, the ingratitude, and finally the death on the cross. He dreaded it all just as any finely strung nature would dread it, just as any of us would be appalled brought up fronting it, and he cried out while the sweat, like great drops of blood, rolled down his face even in that cold early morning,

"Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." That's where so many of us fail in prayer, and so many of us blindly cry out that God does not hear us nor answer us. It's because we are not willing to pay the price for the very thing for which we pray, for health, for prosperity, for leadership, for spiritual graces, for anything that is our soul's sincere desire.

"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." It is a great promise, and it requires an act of faith to believe it and accept it; but it rings true to our experience of life, which is conducted so largely, whether we are conscious of it or not, upon faith. Whether we want to or not, we all pray; and if we ask, we receive, just in proportion as we are willing tirelessly to seek and perseveringly to knock. It is a mystical thing, this thing of prayer. We cannot reason it out, we can only work it out and, with the passage of the years, gain in the art and the skill and the wisdom of prayer.

West Teaching East

Rudyard Kipling has a poem about an Afghan bandit chief who broke into a British camp on the borders of India, stole the colonel's mare from right under his nose and made way with her over the mountains, through the Khyber pass, back to his own country. The colonel's son, a young officer, sprang to the saddle and all alone pursued the robber. He followed the trail into the enemy country where, behind every rock and bush, lurked a bandit rifleman. The chief at any moment could have raised his hand and the colonel's son would have rolled dead in the dust. Instead, the chief at last calmly dismounts and meets his pursuer. The colonel's son, leaping to the ground, offers to do deadly combat for possession of the stolen mare. Then the chief explains to the daring young Englishman the danger in which he stands and gives a brave man's commendation to a boy's dash and daring. More than that, he restores the mare to the colonel's son, while the latter makes a present of his revolver to the chief; and still more, the two of them eat bread and salt together and take the oath of eternal friendship:

"They have taken the oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife and the wondrous names of God."

Then Mr. Kipling adds:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till earth and sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, border, nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth."

East and West are meeting today, eyeing each other and taking each other's measure, even as these two.

It was an oriental who said to his followers, "Go, teach all nations," and the world happened to be so built at the time, with such lines of travel by road and ship, that travelers could go west easier than they could go east. The result has been that the West has learned about him who gave this command, "Go, teach all nations," rather than the East. The West has formally adopted him as leader and teacher, while the East

has not yet had full opportunity to do so. The West, therefore, is nominally Christian, while the East has not yet become Christian.

Now the world sees the strange spectacle of an attempt on the part of the West to teach the story and the philosophy of an oriental Savior to the East from which he came. Added to the strangeness of the situation, we find the East looking at the West in perplexity and even in disdain and saying, " You and your civilization, your culture and your ways of living, are as unlike this Christ you talk about as they could possibly be. How, then, do you come trying to tell us about him? You fight among yourselves. The wheels of your industry crush out the lives of numberless people, and you come bringing us your machines in one hand and your story about Jesus in the other hand. We cannot understand you."

As long as the lone missionary doctor came healing the diseases of the people, building hospitals for them, taking care of orphan children, and teaching at the same time the love and mercy of the Great Physician, the East could understand and could accept the lowly and loving Jesus that the West was talking about. But when the missionary was followed by the silk mill and the cotton mill, the oil company and the gunboat,

then it is little wonder that the Orient could not understand. They saw captains of industry growing up in their own countries who herded their children and their women into their factories by the lure of wages; and they saw those same little children as young as six and seven toiling twelve to fourteen hours a day, often growing sleepy and careless and, therefore, caught and maimed in their machines; they saw young girls gathered from their farms and villages in Japan, able to work from eleven to eighteen months and then coming home to die; they saw the women of India toiling in spite of pregnancy, all but giving birth to their babies in the aisles of the factories, and coming back to work within a week; they saw mothers giving opium to their little babies to keep them quiet in a corner so that the mothers could work through the day in the factory; in short, they saw the dominance of the huge machine civilization coming out of the West with its automobiles, its speed, and its intolerable industrial abuses to take the place of their own former meditative life. And they associate all of this with the name of Christian and with the leadership of Jesus. A new and a different strong man must come out of the West, not warlike but peace-loving.

Then the East saw the West bursting into the

flames of war, Christians killing Christians by the millions. And when that four years of fever and delirium passed, they saw the Christians grabbing land wherever they could grab, and seizing commercial advantage, markets and oil fields wherever they could find them. And the East said, "So this is Christianity! We want none of it!" This is the frightful situation in which the church of Jesus Christ finds itself today as it broods upon the command of Jesus, "Go, teach all nations."

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It is perfectly evident, then, that for the immediate future we can make no impression upon the East with the story of Jesus until we grapple with the un-Christian things in our own civilization, reform and reshape our own ideals more in accordance with the ideals of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Into our machine age, into our indus-

trial life, strong men must somehow project the spirit and the program of Jesus, so that the picture of what we are and what we do shall change, that the East may understand that we have indeed been with Christ and learned a little about him.

In the meantime, all through the East our motion pictures are shown; and the East is forming indelible impressions of the kind of life we lead. They see us racing about in motor cars; they see the things we do in cabarets; they see the wild night life and even the crime life depicted in so many of our motion pictures. Imagine to yourself that you were an oriental, watching in some little theatre in Canton or Tokyo, not the best pictures we produce, but the cheapest and the worst — as that is all that for the most part find their way into the East — and then imagine what picture you would draw in your mind's eye of this western, so-called Christian land. No wonder they take our Christ with reservations. Then when they see in the newsreels our huge flotillas of battleships and destroyers, what can they think of our Prince of Peace?

One of the very first steps we must take, if we are to obey the command of our Lord, "Go, teach," is for the churches in this country to reshape their own lives and to become centers for the real idealism and the real life of Jesus. Re-

cently one of the greatest men in America spoke in my church, to a little company of perhaps a hundred people, a message that must have searched the heart of every one who listened — a flaming young prophet, Reinhold Niebuhr, of New York. His is a voice crying in the darkness, crying for the light of our Christ; he made me wonder whether you and I had ever even started to become Christians. He calls for a totally different attitude on our part toward our amazing wealth and luxury. He calls for a new asceticism, not that which withdraws from the world, but that which remains in the world to reshape and to save it. Niebuhr declares that where love is, there the distinction between "mine" and "thine" breaks down. He illustrates this by the family, which in its ideal form is the highest expression of love, and in which there is no mine and thine but only ours. So must it be with the church whenever love comes into it; and so must it be with society whenever Jesus really begins to reign in it. Listening to him, I made a high resolve, that for myself there should be less of mine and more of thine in what the good God has given to me.

Sherwood Eddy is an illustration of what Niebuhr means. His father was a merchant of Atchison, Kansas, and left him property which

Mr. Eddy has always used throughout his life for Christian purposes. He went himself as a missionary to India; and then he became a missionary to students all over this world — maintaining himself from his own resources. Recently he decided that he was living on too luxurious a scale, so he and his wife moved into a much more modest little apartment in order to spend less upon themselves and to devote more to furthering the ideals of Christ. Not long ago I discovered a man here in this city who has been following the program of Jesus for four years, somewhat like Kagawa in Japan. He lives in a little upstairs room on East Twelfth Street and supports himself as a salesman of odds and ends during the day-time, while at night he is doing humanitarian work wherever he hears the call of need. John L. Jones, a Welshman of delicate and sensitive nature, artistic temperament and the deep love of music which characterizes the Welsh, has given himself and his substance without stint for four years in our city to the distressed and the unfortunate, among men and animals both, without backing and without recognition. When discovered, we promptly added him to the staff of ministers of our church, and annexed his community church as the downtown branch of our own. This is the kind of asceticism that Rein-

hold Niebuhr talks about; and by the grace of God, John L. Jones shall not in the future work alone. More of this kind of life must enter into America if the East is ever going to listen to her story of the Christ.

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Is it the business of the American church, then, to tackle the evils of our industrial system? That is its very first business if it is to fulfill the command of our Lord, "Go, teach." It must clean its own house first, of child labor, or pregnant women's labor, of long hours spent in subjection to machines, of oppression and dominance by factories and mines and materialism in all its forms. If the church is afraid and silent here where the Christ is supposed to reign, it is recreant to its trust; it is like Peter in the courtyard cursing and swearing and denying its Lord. Has the church any right to talk against over-

many gunboats and fleets and armies? That is its main business, if it is to carry out the last injunction of Jesus to his followers, "Go, teach." Is it the business of the church to talk international politics, leagues of nations, multilateral treaties, world courts and conferences for the abolition of war and for peace on earth? The church has no right to sit silent and permit a little handful of greedy commercial men to shape the policy of the nation toward the other peoples of the earth, if it is to even get started upon the work of fulfilling our Lord's last command, "Go, teach." It seems an interminable task, a long hard road to go, to try to change the spirit and atmosphere of our whole civilization, and yet nothing less than that is the task that confronts us. It calls for strong men.

Is it worth while, then, to send any missionaries abroad at all, just now, in view of the well-nigh hopeless condition in which we are all sunk and are all living here at home? Surely. Any desperate measures that we can use to counteract the effect of our invasion of the East with our machine-made and standardized civilization are not only salutary but absolutely necessary, if we are to hold the ground that Jesus has already won in the Orient. There are many Christians there already; and Christ is gaining new followers all

the time. The greatest sages and saints of the East are already his devotees. The most casual reader knows about Gandhi and Tagore in India. I have already mentioned Kagawa in Japan. And the leaders in the new China are Christian-trained men, and most of them Christians by open confession. These men, you may be very sure, have reasoned their way to the conclusion that our faith over here is better than our works; and it is our bounden duty to see that the conquests already won shall not be forfeited. True, our work in the East must be different, from this on, from what it has been in the past. Now the white man must take a back seat and let the brown men take the lead. The East is demanding its own churches, its own leaders, its own doctors and hospitals and schools; and well it may. They want our Christ, but they don't want us; and who can blame them? Hereafter we should go to them for a fair exchange and comparison of ideas and ideals. We can no longer go with any assumption of superiority, but only with the utmost humility, acknowledging to them frankly how far we fall short of the idealism of our Master and willing to sit at their feet and learn from them perhaps a far wiser and truer interpretation of the oriental Christ. Who knows but that out of the East shall come even into our material

West a new and enlarged vision of Jesus? Maybe the first shall be last, and the last first; maybe the teacher shall be the taught.

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Progress Through Suffering

It is not very long since the emphasis in evangelical preaching and teaching was on the " blood atonement." Most of us who are in middle or advanced years can remember the constant harping on this theme. The songs that we sang were incarnadined with the flowing blood of the Redeemer. " Are you washed in the blood of the lamb? ", " The water and the blood from his wounded side which flowed," " There is a fountain filled with blood " — these and similar hymns tingled along our nerves. When Gypsy Smith held his great meeting in convention hall in Kansas City some fifteen years ago, the song which captured the whole of the city, sang itself through the streets and nightly shook the rafters of that great building with iteration and reiteration ran:

" The spirit answers to the blood
And tells me I am born of God."

These songs and this idea of blood redemption all come from the ancient Jewish rite of sacrifice, in which a lamb was brought and slain before the altar while its blood flowed over the sacred stones.

The figure of speech, drawn from this blood sacrifice, penetrated the consciousness of New Testament writers who frequently colored their language with these crimson threads. It is an orientalism, to be sure; western nations know nothing of sacrifice, as a ceremonial performance, and have not known for some millenniums. It is by way of Judea that these scarlet threads have found their way into the woven tapestry of our western thought.

Of more recent years, revolt has sprung up in the minds of Christian people, consciously or unconsciously, against this language so common a generation ago. You don't hear so much said in pulpits and church classrooms about the sacrificial blood of Christ. The thought is clothed in other terms, although the thought is still there. You do not hear the question "Are you washed in the blood of the lamb?" asked so frequently as you used to do. Only in extremely orthodox atmospheres do you often hear such phrases as "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission," and "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sins." Somehow the figure of speech does not seem to fit our occidental ways and manners, which know so little about blood sacrifices. We have softened the doctrine of the blood atonement into the ethical example of Jesus and of

mere moral emulation of his deeds and spirit without over emphasis upon his death. Have we lost anything by this change? I am inclined to wonder if we have not.

In throwing aside old manners and customs, old orthodoxies and phrases, it is altogether possible to lose some things of deep significance. In the revolt against over-literalism, I am increasingly sure that the church has lost much that she ought to hold on to with all her heart and soul. On the one hand, we have a few extreme fundamentalists who still harp upon the crimson stream, dyed blood-red at the cross of Christ. On the other hand, we have a pale and bloodless liberalism, impatient of all reference to the blood shed on Calvary and all allusion to the power for salvation for this poor old world which lies in the death of Christ. As so often happens among us human beings who can so easily become extremists, the truth lies between these opposite poles. Undoubtedly our age is impatient of purely Judaic symbols and phrases; we shall be unconvincing in carrying the message of Christ, if we use too strongly and too frequently metaphors drawn from the killing of lambs and bullocks upon high places. On the other hand, to swing like a pendulum to the opposite end of the arc, and to talk and think and preach only an anemic

and philosophical ethical culture will loosen the fingers of the church — as indeed it has already done — upon the hearts, affections, and loyalties of masses of men and women. What is the true path between these so widely divergent views? What is the true place of the blood and death of Jesus, and what the true principle of bloody sacrifice in all human experience? I think there is a very real place for this blood and for the preaching of it.

The word "atonement" is not found in the New Testament. Its birth took place after the Scriptures were formed; but it is not a bad word at that; on the contrary, it has real significance, even for our scientific age. We may well be impatient of the mechanical theories set forth by scholastic theologians concerning this word. There is, for example, the substitutionary idea: that Christ died as a substitute for us criminals who had incurred the death penalty by inherited sin and later voluntary rebellion. Christ went to the cross in our place, just as if somebody else had gone to the electric chair for some one condemned at Sing Sing. That far-drawn doctrine offends our sense of justice. Our human courts and human states would never permit any such manifest absurdity. Then there is the ransom theory: that all humanity belonged to the devil

and that God, to rescue them, paid his son as a ransom price, to set humanity free. That, too, offends the inherent sense of justice and right which springs eternal in the human breast. No honest man could submit to such a transaction, let alone a just God. A further and later theory is that God's law had been violated by rebellious human beings. It will not do for the law to be flouted; a penalty must be paid by somebody to vindicate the dignity and majesty of the law. Consequently, Jesus suffers in order that the law may stand unblemished and untarnished. Once more a manifest injustice. Whenever we find the police departments providing a victim, no matter who, just to satisfy public clamor, our gorge rises in indignation. A just God couldn't do it. No, these theories are no longer convincing nor even interesting to this modern time. We do not think in those channels; our minds have been too much influenced by the scientific spirit; we reason too much by induction and are too little given to deducing weird, strained propositions to fit individual proof texts. We are impatient with the whole lot of them, and have thrown them into the discard.

Does that mean that there is no such thing as blood atonement? By no means. We see it as a deeply imbedded principle in all nature and in

human life. Nothing has entered more deeply into our view of the world than that progress comes only by pain, friction, the shedding of blood. That nature is red in tooth and claw has become with us a truism; and that species rise over the mutilated carcasses of the weak and the unfit. It may seem to us a hard law, but we are perfectly familiar, since Darwin and the ushering in of the scientific era, with the conception of the struggle for existence. The brighter side of this picture comes with maturer reflection. We have come to see that there is a struggle for the life of others, that sacrifice and pain suffered in behalf of others is the most beautiful principle underlying the life of the world. More than that, the highest joy comes to us only in return for such blood atonement.

Life truly is one continued battle. We rise on stepping stones of our dead selves. We never take a step forward except by the very opposition of the earth to our desired progress. We push the earth from us, with an equal and opposite reaction, at every step. Railway trains cannot move upon the rails except by friction, heat and sparks, and the writhing and suffering of the atoms. A mother literally pours out her blood and her life when she brings forth her child, and she can never know the highest supernal joy until she has

done so, going down into the valley of the shadow, and up to Calvary's hill. Then through long years, she pours out her life in the same literal fashion in the nurture and the training and the protection of her child. Women cannot be most supremely happy without pain. Men, too, reach only the divinest heights at the cost of blood. Sidney Lanier, who knew so well the joy of creation and of creative thought, as well as its suffering, declares, " Thought is carnivorous. It lives on meat. We never have an idea whose existence has not been purchased by the death of some atom of our fleshly tissues."

It would seem as plain as plain can be, therefore, that martyrdom redeems, saves, glorifies this world and its people. No life ever pays the last full measure of devotion but that hundreds of other lives are drawn up nearer and nearer to the light. No prophet has ever been stoned, burned, beheaded or crucified but that the whole earth has been moved a little nearer up toward God. When men die for causes, those causes are much more likely to prevail. Count Tolstoi knew this and hoped and prayed for death at the hands of the Russian people. It was a sore disappointment to him that they didn't kill him; for he knew that if they did, his thought would sink forever deep into their souls. Lincoln accomplished far more

for the unification and the freedom of the American people by his death than ever he could have done by a prolonged life. Woodrow Wilson wrought more for the peace of the world when he fell in the field fighting for it than he could probably ever have done in another decade of strong and healthy living. Never is blood and sweat spent in vain, and the bloody sweat of the Garden of Gethsemane had vital effect upon the salvation of the world. The lashes laid on the back of Jesus in the castle of Antonia, with their crimson flood, have saved and redeemed many a lonely struggler through the jungles of this world. The water and the blood, from his wounded side which flowed, have time and time again been of sin the double cure. When we lose that central conception both of human life and of Christianity, many will go unsaved, trying feebly to lean upon their own strength alone and to be guided by their own little unaided wisdom.

To put this great truth even into the scientific jargon of our times, martyrdom is a stimulus which brings a certain definite reaction. Let us but see a man dare to take his place within the breach, to thrust his hand into the leak in the dyke, or, like Arnold Winklereid, to bare his breast to the darts of any implacable foe; let us

but see young men throw their merry lives away in Flanders fields or in winning and subduing the trackless forests and plains of our western land; let us but see any devoted soul stand up as a target for malignity and hate and persecution, until he is wounded and even killed, and immediately a heroic impulse surges up within our own breasts to do something of the same kind, in a smaller way at least, and to face the foes that surround us with a more undaunted front. The blood of heroes saves us. It saves us in two very definite ways: by emulation, a desire to be heroic on our own part, to be brave, to endure and to dare; and then it saves us by an inward aspiration after the unseen, the divine, the eternal and the deathless.

I would not be understood as declaring that the death of Jesus saves us only as an example. Undoubtedly, the willingness to suffer, the brave meeting of martyrdom, does have the effect of elevating the ethical conduct of all who behold it. Nothing is more contagious than fine, high idealism and the uttermost self-sacrifice in behalf of it. Even to hear a man like Jesus teaching as he taught, and then going relentlessly, unswervingly, with his eyes wide open, straight along the path to the cross, has a tremendous effect upon the ethics, the morals of every one who hears of it. Idealism, courage, sympathy and love —

these things are more catching than scarlet fever or typhus. Thank God that it is so. I think something of this is what Jesus meant when he said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." It was his life and his work, his love and his death, that he meant would lift him up, and that if it occurred, the compelling beauty of it all, blood and all, pain and all, would draw men, even with reluctant step and stubbornly fighting against the inner compulsions, to him. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Neither do I maintain that I have put into words, these few and halting words, all the mystery of this ineffable atonement. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy and our feeble science. For every one of us, the death of Christ means more than we are able or perhaps willing to express. Although we have rejected the old hard and fast dogmas of the middle ages, we nevertheless have comprehended that pain and suffering and blood are the price of salvation and redemption even among ordinary human beings, and we have become acquainted with many and many a pain-sweetened face that has helped to brighten dark shadows along our way. We know that martyrdom redeems, that it stirs us to imitation and to

high enthusiasm, that it is an example to us, and that the sympathy and the love and the ideals out of which it grows fly from heart to heart with a blessed contagion. All this we know; but behind and beyond it lies that mystic union between the heart of the believer and the suffering, bleeding heart of that mysterious redeemer, who is Christ the Lord. Unless and until the church is willing to admit that there does lie behind the death of Christ this mystery, this beauty of holiness and this holiness of beauty, it can never resume full sway over the minds and hearts of myriads who have now grown cold toward her; yes, and not only to admit the mystery, but to proclaim it from pulpit and teacher's platform, in private converse and public discourse. This is the high point, the highest point in the gospel of the living and dying Christ.

What is Salvation?

What is salvation? Our ideas on this subject have long been rather hazy. To most of us it has been represented, first or last, as a commodity to be obtained. We have been exhorted to come and get it, much as the soldiers in camp were invited at chow time; but we seldom have responded with quite the enthusiasm manifested by the soldiers. We have been told often enough that salvation is free, which has not added greatly to our estimate of its value, for we have seldom been told what this salvation is that is so free. We gained a dim notion in our childhood and youth that perhaps it was a park, a sort of Eden, to which we paid an admission price of so much faith — whatever that was — and so much repentance — whatever that meant — and a great deal of baptism, which we all thoroughly understood. Really the baptism seemed to be the ticket of admission, without which nothing.

Possibly our notion was that salvation was synonymous with a place called heaven, which was up yonder somewhere or off yonder somewhere over a hill or a mountain range, to which there were gates and a gate-keeper with a big

bunch of keys and a long grey beard and a very fearsome aspect. To get past him required an examination in theological principles and a record of conduct fairly clean, though the conduct was not so important as the theology. Salvation was a sort of passport, well viséd, and all fees paid and receipted. In other words, salvation was an insurance policy of everlasting bliss somewhere, some time far off; and preachers and evangelists were the insurance agents who manifested greater or less skill as salesmen. If one of them asked you the question, "Are you saved?" you couldn't exactly tell, because the policy was not written out in black and white, although the salesman insisted that it was. Frequently the assertion was made, "He is saved," or "He is not saved." And you had doubts as to anybody's certain knowledge either one way or the other. The whole thing seemed hazy and indefinite.

So hazy, indeed, was the conception of salvation that for some of us it seemed like a shining silver armour which one could put on to turn away the shafts of all enemies. Perhaps this idea was unconsciously derived from the oft quoted phrases of St. Paul concerning "the helmet of salvation" and "the armour of righteousness." Or, perhaps dimly, we thought of ourselves as arrayed or not arrayed in white and glistening

garments, a sort of aura to indicate the very spiritual and indefinite and perplexing condition of salvation, into which we had entered or had not entered, as the case might be.

I don't want to be flippant or irreverent about this matter, but I do want to be clear, and to start others to thinking clearly, if it is possible for us to do so about a subject which appears to be of great importance.

As a first step, suppose we try to find out what Jesus, the founder of our religion, meant by the word "salvation." How did he happen to say at Jericho, "This day is salvation come to this house," and what did he mean by the word? He was dining in the home of Zacchaeus, a very small tax-gatherer, or publican, with a very big fortune and a very strong unpopularity. This little rich man had manifested such great eagerness to see Jesus that he had run ahead of the crowd and climbed up a tree; and when Jesus invited himself home with Zacchaeus to dinner, the enthusiastic little fellow, won by the Master's simple presence to a deep loyalty and to a new philosophy of life, suddenly cried out, "From this time I am going to give half my possessions to feed the poor, and if I have taken too much from anybody I am going to give back four times as much as I took." At once Jesus exclaimed, "This day is

salvation come to this house." It is perfectly evident what Jesus means — that the change which has come to this man, the new view, the sense of obligation of wealth, the aspiration toward brotherhood and helpfulness, and a desire to be something better than he had ever been before, this is salvation. Jesus does not demand of this man that he give all his money away, as he did of a certain other rich young man; because Zacchaeus was not money mad, as the rich young man was. Much money or no money is not the essential thing, then, in salvation. The essential thing is the aspiration, the new resolution, the larger philosophy of life.

Take another instance: Jesus tells the story of a foolish young chap who made his father divide up the fortune between him and his brother and who then went off and spent it all in a short time with roues and high-jackers in booze and red-light districts. In hunger and rags, hired out to herd hogs, he was hungry enough to eat the shucks that the hogs refused to eat. "When he came to himself," he said, "I am going home to my father." This, the most beautiful story, the most poignant, and the most universal that Jesus ever told, means that salvation came to that young rascal the minute it could be said of him, "He came to himself." To "come to," as we put it in our

strong vernacular, to regain consciousness, to emerge from a condition in which we are out of our heads or beside ourselves, to come back and re-enthrone reason, this is salvation. To be one's self is to be one's best self; and, of course, when we are in that state we are clad in shining armour against all the darts of this world. "To thine own self be true and it must follow as the night the day, thou can'st not then be false to any man"; and still more, it makes no difference how false any man may be, or fate itself, to you.

Again, Jesus tells of two men who came up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, that is, an elder in the church and a big politician, maybe treasurer of the national committee of his party, and the other a tax-gatherer, a worldly man, a man about town. And the treasurer of the national committee prays after this fashion: "Lord, I am glad I am not like other men, like this tax-gathering sport here. I teach a Sunday School class, I wouldn't play golf on Sunday nor go to a baseball game, not for anything. I give a tenth of my income to philanthropy and to the treasury of my party. I feel mighty good about myself. I love myself." The other man prays, with downcast eyes, "Lord, I am a poor excuse of a man, not half good enough according to my own lights. Be lenient with me. I'll do better if

I can." "Now," says Jesus, "this man, the tax-gatherer, the man of the world, goes down to his house justified, rather than the other." It is his humility which vindicates him, his desire to be better than he is, his aspiration.

Once more, there is the story of the good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite, the professedly religious men of his own nationality, pass by the bloody, wounded man on the Jericho road, who had been beaten up by bandits, and they hurry on up to the temple to worship. It is a foreigner, cordially hated by all good Jews, who stops, binds up the man's wounds, takes him to the inn, and pays his score in advance. Says Jesus, "Which one of these is neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?" Manifestly, the Samaritan. Then the Master adds, "Go ye and do likewise, for verily I say unto you that the sinners and the outcasts shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before some of you."

It is evident therefore that salvation consists of neighborly acts of brotherly kindness, disregard of danger in helping somebody in trouble, the spending of one's self for the social good. Haven't we now got a pretty good notion of what Jesus meant by salvation? And isn't it a very simple thing, after all? Not a commodity, not a place nor a park, with an admission price, not an

aura of sanctity nor an aureole of holiness, but a good, honest humility and aspiration to be better men and better women and a willingness to lend a hand to other people; not a selfish seeking after a reward of some kind, present or distant, but a deep-souled desire to be just as good and as full of affection and of human helpfulness as we can.

Says Henry Ward Beecher: "Now when men ask, 'What is salvation?' I say emancipation from everything that holds men down; from the bondage of matter; from the rigor of undeveloped tendencies; from all infelicities of the lower nature which are accompanied with ineptitudes, with dullness of head, with unskillfulness of hand, with shallowness of heart; from low and degraded forms of affection; from the vast realm of inferiority into which men are born."

When Christ died, then, he died to save us to our better selves, to this large, free realm of aspiration or the upward look, and to the outstretched hand of helpfulness toward everybody else. Jesus died to save man from self, not man from Satan; he died to save man from atrophy, not man from hell; he died to save man from man, not man from God. We are no longer content to think of this universe as a house divided against itself with a great spirit of good on

one side and a spirit of evil and destruction on the other, with man as a bone of contention between the two. Such a dualism no longer satisfies the scientific spirit and thinking of our day.

We cannot understand a battle between God on one side and the devil on the other with poor little man as the prize to be won by one or other of these forces. We can understand the battle that goes on within man's own heart for mastery of himself, the dramatic struggle between his lower and his higher nature so vividly set forth by St. Paul, and we can grasp the meaning and the purpose of this conflict and the beautiful logic that underlies it. This age knows nothing about a system of future rewards and punishments, but it does know about the very real and the very present hell which comes from living beneath ourselves and our own best instincts. This age cannot understand nor believe that man needs to be saved from God. We have no comprehension of and no patience with such old phrases as " sinners in the hands of an angry God." We don't believe in an angry God, we have no time for an angry God; we believe in a gentle and kind and loving heavenly Father, and we do not consider that man needs to be saved from God but to be saved towards God.

We do see, and see very clearly, that man

needs to be saved from man, that man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. We do see the necessity of helping our fellowman on the Jericho road, who has been knocked down and trampled upon by our iron-handed and iron-footed industrial system, by the exploitation of the strong, the misfortune of slack times and involuntary unemployment, the slavery and the destruction of war and the dominance of so-called peace-time governments for the benefit of the few and the privileged which is no less destructive than war. All this is plain as plain can be, the need to save man from his fellow man, from the institutions and the untoward circumstances designed by man through which a few strong and powerful walk over the prostrate forms of their fellows. The question, "Are you saved?" begins to take on far larger aspects than it did a generation ago when the whole answer to it could be given in terms of sawdust trails, confessions or professions of faith, and the rites and ceremonials of entrance into an organization called the church, or the association of the "saved."

Jesus died to effect a larger salvation for us all, and death was the surest means by which to effect it. Nothing less than martyrdom was possible for him who undertook this stupendous

task. To turn the whole world from satisfaction with an animal materialism and to lift it up to a spiritual aspiration, to shake it loose from the shackles of a sordid self and set it free for a world-wide service to humanity and the highest ideals for human welfare, to disabuse its mind of all fear towards and to instill a love and affection for him which should lead us all to seek persistently for a consciousness of him in our lives, our hearts, our environment, all this is an undertaking that nothing but a death could consummate. And what a beautiful means it is by which to accomplish so great an end! Death, life's most beautiful adventure, and death, too, prompted by love, what more powerful means could anyone employ with which to draw the hearts of men from the low and the groveling, the mean and the unworthy, up to the high levels of spiritual absorption in everything true and beautiful and good and the aspiration after these which may well be called salvation. This is what Jesus died to bring about, and this by the grace of God he is slowly but surely accomplishing. So may the old phrases gain for us a new and a finer content: "Saved by the blood of Christ," "washed in the blood of the lamb." Used with this understanding, and clothed with this larger conception, these old stock evangelical phrases shine with a new

and a finer light for this most modern day, incandescent in their illumination.

In the light of these thoughts, moreover, we gain a keener appreciation of the logic and the spiritual insight of St. Paul who devised, in perfect harmony with the teaching of Jesus, the so-called doctrine of justification by faith. Sounds hard to understand, put in just that language; but it is easy enough to grasp when we ascertain that Paul's idea is only an outgrowth of the teaching of Christ that salvation is really aspiration. Paul simply affirms that God takes us not for what we are but for what we aspire to become; not for what we do, so imperfect is our performance, but for what we would like to do. In other words, God counts the will for the deed, just as you and I do in dealing with our children; God counts us just because of our faith in him as our Father and because of our humble yet determined desire to do what he would like to have us do and to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. This is justification by faith, this is salvation by aspiration.

How much more simple and understandable, how much more comforting and inspiring, is this view than the legalistic system of our fathers only a generation or two ago, who wrote and spoke in such exact terms concerning the plan of salva-

tion and the scheme of redemption. What a hard and forbidding thing it was, and how perplexing, when they made the whole matter of safety to our hearts and lives to depend upon certain theological beliefs and the obedience to certain prescribed ceremonials. What a relief to go back to the heart of Christ himself and to find that in his weightiest words he teaches us that salvation is an inner state, a state of kneeling of the heart, of humility and aspiration after the finest and the best in life, a state of serviceableness, mutual helpfulness, neighborliness, and human brotherhood. How it simplifies things to know that he gave his life not by way of a perfunctory and ceremonial and legalistic sacrifice, but in a desperate desire to break the heart of man, reduce it from pride and self-sufficiency, cruelty and self-aggrandizement, to a state of gentleness and sympathy and love. This is what he died for, to make us free from all things and all desires low and degrading and to set us upon a high plane of aspiration.

The "Second Coming" Legend

The story of the ascension of Jesus shows that when the book of Acts was written, possibly in the third quarter of the first century, already the legend of the second coming had crystallized among his followers. Indeed, even earlier, from the epistles of St. Paul, we learn that this expectation had become clear and marked. Ever since that time the hope of a second physical and visible coming of Christ has been deeply imbedded in the minds of his followers.

Most of us, doubtless, can recall how much of our childhood thought was influenced by this idea of the second coming. Some of us were actually brought up on it, so that it was rarely absent from our minds for a day or night at a time. Every now and then some one would set a definite date for the end of the world, the second coming of Christ, and the beginning of the millennium. Some one had figured it all out from the involved prophecies in the books of Daniel and Ezekiel, coupled with the extravagant imagery of the book of Revelation, until the whole thing was to his own satisfaction mathematically outlined. Sometimes a group of fanatics would give up their work,

devote days and nights to prayer, fasting, and preparation for the advent; then some morning at sunrise they would ascend the nearest hill, robed in white, and await the appearance of Jesus in the sky. Of course, he never kept these one-sided appointments, and the poor, deluded, and discouraged devotees would wend their way back, half-heartedly, and inefficiently take up the course of their interrupted lives. We children who heard about these predictions and who were frequently told that this second coming was a well-founded expectation used to waste a great deal of childish meditation upon it and used to shiver and shake with a great deal of fear about it. I can even remember when some of us selected our sheets and pillow cases with which to array ourselves in white flowing garments, appropriately to put on a good appearance against that awful day. And how we worried about that last raid into neighbor Brown's melon patch, or those eggs or green apples we stole, or the fights we had recently had with the Vinegar Hill gang, or any of the other boyish peccadillos which we had been taught to regard as heinous crimes.

A great many people have gone crazy over this legend of a visible second coming of Christ, almost as many as have gone crazy over the sin against the Holy Ghost. Sometimes I wish

Jesus had never said a word about the sin against the Holy Ghost! Even yet it might astonish one to find out how widespread and deeply rooted in the minds of many people is this idea of the second coming, as revealed in letters and conversations that a minister has upon religious topics. In fact, many preachers and evangelists are harping on it a great deal of the time. During the world war I can recollect that several of the leading clergymen of this town — and in particular one of them — were perfectly certain that in a very short time the affairs of this world were to be wound up and that Christ would appear to usher in the thousand years of peace. But it did not happen.

How did this thing get started? And why has it continued throughout all these centuries? Partly because the followers of Jesus too literally interpreted some of his highly figurative speech. He reminded them over and over that he was talking in parables, but all to no avail; they insisted upon taking him with mathematical accuracy. No doubt he foresaw and foretold the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Roman forces which took place in the year 70 A. D. So keen and bold and statesmanlike a mind as his could scarcely fail to see the catastrophe about to fall upon the heads of the rebellious people of Judea. When

he talked about that, his followers thought that he was talking about something on a far grander scale which would put an end to the life of the entire world. Then, too, these few hints that he gave, in a greatly elaborated form, were woven into the narrative of his life and teaching, so that much more was attributed to him upon the subject than he had ever actually spoken. St. Paul himself, cool and hardheaded as he was, found himself over influenced by these legendary exaggerations, to such an extent that in his very first letter, the first epistle to the Thessalonians, he holds out this expectation of an immediate second coming. Then, in six months' time, he has to write a second letter to the same people to quiet them in their extravagance of expectation and to put an end to their idleness and their debating over this issue. From this time on, the idea of a second coming grows dimmer and fainter with St. Paul, until at the end of his course he has nothing whatsoever to say upon the subject.

Another source of this expectation is the very natural and inherent tendency of humankind to look for the return of its great heroes, particularly in times of national disappointment and discouragement. The Jews looked for Elijah to return. The Romans looked for Nero. The

British looked for King Alfred. The North American Indians looked for Hiawatha, or some one of their old chieftains, to come back and restore them their happy hunting grounds. The tendency is well-nigh irresistible among helpless human beings. Israel would have looked for a Messiah if the prophets had never said a word about him; indeed the prophets talked about him because the people looked for him. And when the Messiah was crucified, and disappointed everybody by not becoming a king at once, they inevitably turned back to the old way of thinking and said to themselves, "He will come back again in clouds and great splendor. This same Jesus shall so come again in like manner as we have seen him go." As for us westerners, we have simply gone his followers one better in literalism, have once again failed to orient ourselves in biblical literature, and have surrendered ourselves to the easy path, so very easy for the human mind to tread, of comforting ourselves with the hope of a visible second coming.

The bad effects of this exaggerated hope outweigh the possible benefits. Just as at Thessalonica Paul's first letter, setting forth the hope of the second coming, made the people idle and disputatious, so harping upon the theme cuts the nerve of human life and activity even now. There

is a story current in New England that certain of the Puritan fathers were holding a town meeting in a church, when suddenly an eclipse of the sun took place, a darkness like that of midnight descended, accompanied by a storm of thunder and lightning and heavy wind. One of the elders declared it was evident the second coming of the Lord was about to take place; so he moved an adjournment that the assembly might betake itself to prayer and preparation. Another old Puritan rose to his feet and said, "If the Lord is indeed at hand, he could not find us better employed than in dealing with his business in these colonies. I move that candles be brought and that we proceed with the deliberations of the assembly." This sober second thought prevailed, but it is not always that good hard sense gets the upper hand; too often the emphasis upon the second coming upsets people's minds and even leads them to distraction. Better get our minds off the subject.

Another bad effect is the fear that mingles with such an expectation. If we could look with unmixed joy for the second coming, it would not be so bad, but it seems we cannot. Most of us are uneasy about our conduct, and are conscience smitten too much of the time, to look forward with unmixed pleasure to coming face to face with

God or Christ. Of course the sensible thing is to rid ourselves of such fear, but it is easier said than done; so it follows, in my judgment, that it is unwholesome to harp upon any topic which adds to that fear instead of alleviates it. There is fear enough in the world, God knows, all too much fear, and anything which adds one little ounce to the fear in burdened human hearts we ought to discountenance and, if possible, destroy.

Furthermore, the tendency in brooding upon this subject is to cast our thought and life too much into the future. We live enough in the future as it is. We cannot help but look forward and anticipate. The impulse is irresistible to expect the joy and the happiness of tomorrow or next week or next summer. "Man never is, but always to be, blessed." And if, as we get older, we surrender something of this anticipation and dwell more largely in the past we miss just that much of the intensity, the efficiency and the joy of living more strongly in the present.

> "We look before and after and pine for what is not;
> E'en our serenest laughter with some pain is fraught."

We cannot help this impulse to lift ourselves out of the present either into the future or the past,

but at least we ought to do our best to live for the day, the now, the here; and anything which adds to this tendency to transport ourselves away from the present hour, I take it, is not advantageous to the human race. The insistence on the second coming of Christ is one of these things.

The real truth is that the second coming has already taken place, and is progressively taking place all the time. The second coming began when St. Paul slept that night at Troas and dreamed of a man calling him over to Macedonia, and when he sailed across that little arm of the Aegean Sea and set his bare feet for the first time on European soil at Philippi. The second coming thundered in his footsteps as he swept from east to west with the teaching of the Nazarene. Jesus came in clouds and great glory, accompanied by cohorts and legions, and assaulted the Roman empire as it sat imperiously upon the seven hills of what was called the Eternal City. His sappers and miners dug under the foundation of the palace of the Caesars until it crumbled into ruin. The fair-haired barbarians of the North came plunging southward out of their bogs and forests, invaded and conquered the capital of the world, only to be themselves conquered by the new king coming from the east. In a way that they did not at the moment compre-

hend, he gained sovereignty over these northern hordes and subdued them, at least in a measure, to his imperial will. They carried him back upon their shoulders and embossed upon their shields into their gloomy haunts and homes at the north. His second coming rolled like a great golden chariot all over western Europe and then came in Puritan and Cavalier galleons across the hitherto unknown sea, so that the greatest of western nations, which arose in the wilderness, builded itself avowedly as a part of his realm on earth. All European history, and therefore all American history, began to take shape and form when St. Paul sailed across a little arm of the Aegean Sea from Troas in Asia Minor to Philippi in Europe.

I was reading recently the words of a great Englishman, who sat at the very heart of the government during the world war, as he traced the rise of our western civilization and our western democracies upon the ruins of the Roman empire. He showed how representative government had arisen and spread in Great Britain in dominions where the sun never sets, in France, in Germany, in America; and then he tossed off the statement in a rapid aside, "All this was made possible by the aid of Christianity." That was the only reference to religion which I can re-

member in his entire book. He just took it for granted, he assumed it as a truism, that however un-Christian many of our practices in the western world may be, and however un-Christian we ourselves, nevertheless the very fabric of our civilization, our free commonwealths, our democracies, are made possible by the presence of him who came so humbly and so modestly riding on an ass's colt into the affairs of the whole wide world.

He is still coming. He has not completely arrived. He is walking westward into our civilization, which is founded upon him and upon his teachings and his ideals, however imperfectly we practice them. He came to us in the Renaissance, in the Reformation, in the revolutions in France and in America, yes, and even in a way in that bloody Russian revolution. He came in the scientific era and in the industrial revolution. Today he is increasingly coming in the strengthening of education, in the enlightenment of human minds, in the dissipation of superstition and darkness. He is coming in the triumphs of science, in our greater mastery of nature and our increasing harmony with it. He is coming in the increased sense of justice and the rights of man, in the finer ethics and higher ideals of social right and human conduct, and in the spreading beauty of life. His precepts are preached not merely

from the pulpit, but in assemblies of laymen and from the public press, in all forms of literature and of art. Who can look at the world as it was before Christianity crossed from Asia into Europe and not feel that Christ is coming, slowly but surely coming, increasingly and triumphantly coming, into the hearts of men and nations, bringing with him deep and powerful yearnings after peace and truth and brotherhood. Yes, he has come and is more and more coming.

It is for us, then, not to look for him in the skies but here on earth, not to wait for him in the future but to take him here and now. We need not strive and cry, eat our hearts with a tremulous expectation, but take him at once, now, today, and here. If life holds for us any perplexity we don't have to wait to consult him in the future, but we can bring it to him at this very moment and with our own best judgment, guided by his life and his teaching, we can unravel it. If we have any sadness, loneliness, disappointment, loss, pain or misery, we can come with it to him at this present moment and he will not only help us to bear it but help us to find a way out. This statement is true beyond all shadow of doubt, true because we have seen it fulfilled in the experience of thousands of men and women whom we have seen welcome him in a new advent into their hearts and

lives, and have seen them transformed, made over, set free, ennobled by his new and radiant coming. It is not for us to cling to an oriental legend built upon small foundation and never intended by Jesus to become a cardinal doctrine in the Christian creed; it is not for us to absorb the ill effects of such a mistaken superstition, but it is for us to open our eyes and see how he has already come, as he said, "without observation," through two thousand years, among the leading nations of the earth; and it is for us consciously and determinedly to advance his coming in light and beauty, in radiance and joy, in service and in brotherhood, throughout all these greatest nations and to all the rest of the world.

Endless Life

The phrase, " endless life," certainly has great power in it, whether men want it or want to escape it. It stirs them and thrills them whenever they hear it spoken. The intellectual aristocracy of Athens listened patiently to Paul until he came to that idea and mentioned the resurrection; then they refused to listen further. They had no tolerance for a belief in the after life. To them death ended all. Even the Jews were divided by this phrase into two sects, the Pharisees who believed in immortality and the Sadducees who did not. The world today may be roughly divided into two halves, East and West, the former of which desires nothing so much as extinction, an everlasting sleep and a forgetting, while the latter is hungry for unending life. Even here in the West, almost any social group may be quickly split in two by the introduction of that phrase. Part of the group will express itself as believing unalterably in personal survival after death, and the other part will just as emphatically declare its skepticism or its complete unbelief. For my single self, I belong to the former group and declare myself in harmony with the prevailing

thought of the western world, the Christian world, that we shall survive as individuals, with memory and personality; that we shall see those whom we have loved long since and lost awhile, see them face to face and know them better than ever we have known them here.

I know how much our thought is controlled by our emotions, and that is why I am writing here not what I think about immortality but how I feel about immortality. I recognize how much the personal equation has to do with our thinking upon this and, indeed, all other topics; and since this is true, the best that I can do — or that anybody else can do for others — is to present for their consideration my personal equation upon this theme or any other. My faith, for that is what it is — not an unreasoned faith, however — springs from a hill in Judea, rounded and domed like a skull and called indeed Golgotha, "the place of a skull," with an empty tomb hewn out of solid rock in a garden at the base of the hill.

> "There is a green hill far away
> Without a city wall;
> There the dear Lord was crucified,
> Who died to save us all."

There is no historical doubt what took place upon that hill, unless all history of so short a

time as two thousand years ago is open to doubt. We know that Jesus died there by hanging upon a cross. We know that his body, wrapped in white linen, was laid in a tomb freshly hewn from solid rock, and that according to the customs in that time and country a huge round stone, like a mill stone, was rolled in a groove to cover the entrance and was sealed with the Roman seal. Then we know that devoted women, always the first at the cradle and the last at the grave, women so faithful at heart that they never desert the place of sepulture of those they love, came in the early dawn with spices and sweet ointments to place upon the body of him they loved. We know that they debated between themselves as to how they should roll the great stone away from before the tomb. Pathetically hopeless, they did not in their wildest dreams anticipate that they should ever see him any more.

> "Now he is dead; far hence he lies
> In that lorn Syrian town;
> And on his grave with pitying eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down."

Then something happened, something strange, something eerie, something that shook their little world and has shaken the whole big world ever since. Just what it was I do not know; nor is it

important that I should know. Only the consequences that marched out of the dim greyness of that Near-East dawn are of importance to us; for with the rising of the sun on that first Easter morning there burst full upon the world the hope of immortality and endless life. One thing I know, he did not end his life on Calvary. It goes on and on through all the stream of time that has flowed by since that first Easter dawn, and he still goes on, the most powerful personality at this hour and the most potent influence in human life, East or West. He, and nothing else and nothing less than he, forms the foundation for my belief that my loved ones who have left me have not died, and that I shall not die but shall rejoin them in happy islands when, as Joseph Fort Newton says, death shall hang its sickle on my garden gate.

There are no proofs of immortality. No one can demonstrate, like a theorem in Euclid, that if a man die he shall live again. Some things are too great to be proved — like God, for instance. A man wastes his breath and his time trying to prove that God is. Humanity obstinately and incurably believes in God; and you cannot prove to humanity the contrary. Mr. Emerson once said, "I am sorry if I have been betrayed into saying anything that requires proof."

The poet of the lakes, Wordsworth, however, saw keenly and far when he coined the phrase, "intimations of immortality." There are plenty of intimations all about us. Over and over again the poets, who are the truest seers, have pointed out to us the return of spring, the bursting of the buds from dead limbs, the flowers that thrust up from frost-bitten roots, the resurgence of a resistless tide of life which, with the passing of winter and its deadness, gladdens all living things with a sense of resurrection. The primrose by the river's brim, the flower in the crannied wall, the bursting egg shell, the broken chrysalis — all these are nature's poetry singing to us of unending life. I know this is not mathematics, nor legalistic demonstration.

If we must have science, let us turn to the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy. We have known since our high school days, and our elements of physics and chemistry, that no single atom ever goes entirely out of existence but only changes form. We do not burn up the wood and the coal and the oil; we only turn them from a solid to a gaseous state; that is, we only make fine particles of them and let them rise free into the air to recombine again in other forms. Indeed, we have just lately come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as

matter, but only force; and that each atom of so-called matter is made up of opposite poles of magnetic force to which we have given the name electrons. Moreover, our high school doctrine of the conservation of force still remains unchallenged. Force never dies, never is lost; it may be only dissipated, scattered, altered, to recombine again in other forms of manifestation. Now one of the forces which is most evident to our perception is that vital force which we call life. This frame of mine, it is nothing — ninety-eight per cent water, is it? What little lime and mineral there is about me would make scarcely a handful when the crematorium had done its work. But there is something else there, some mysterious force, some power which can send its broken words and mean out through the ether to thousands and tens of thousands of other vital forces able to take them in. What is that vital force? What gives it memory? What can ever destroy that force or eternally break that memory? It is hard to answer that question on a purely mechanistic view of our world and all the worlds. I know this is only an intimation, but the burden of proof rather seems to me to rest upon those who deny that this force we call life goes on and on and knows no end.

These intimations, I freely confess, were not

enough for me, unbuttressed by something more steadfast and more sure. Amid all the doubting and hesitating voices, therefore, that have ever spoken upon this theme throughout all the centuries, so far as their words have been recorded, I turn to that one clarion voice which rings like a bugle across the centuries, with no tremor of hesitation or doubt in it, the voice of Him who claims to know and who, about everything else spiritual, religious, artistic, social, and ethical, has been proved to know, the voice that spoke in some mysterious manner in the grey dawn on the first Easter day to those loving and awe-struck women.

Nobody else has anything to tell me about my future life. He has; with a calm assurance he declares that he has. He knows, and knows he knows. What, then, does he tell me? He says: "Because I live, ye shall live also. In my father's palace are many apartments. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." I don't care how many of these words have been translated into the Greek atmosphere of Asia Minor at the close of the first century. Undoubtedly he implanted the idea, even though it was later

clothed in the terms of a beautiful Greek philosophy. The idea is there, not to be disguised, not to be misunderstood, plain and simple and clear, so that the veriest fearful child, afraid of death and the dark, cannot fail to comprehend. Like Emerson, he does not undertake to prove. He never undertook to prove God, but talked as if to little children about "my father and your father." So about endless life, he says in that simple, matter of fact fashion of his, "If it were not so, I would have told you." These words of his, this calm assumption, this placid certitude is the ground of my faith in unending life.

Nor is this docility on my part a surrender of my reason to the authority and the dominance of an outside personality. On the contrary, I reason that he whose words have been tested and tried as no other words that ever fell from human lips, by two thousand years of experimentation in social life, in individual aspiration, even in jurisprudence and statecraft, and have proven true to all that is finest and best in human relations, he could not have been mistaken nor deluded upon this, the most vital question that men ask of themselves and of the mysteries that surround them: "If a man die, shall he live again?" I insist that mine is not a religion of authority, a faith dominated by an outside force; but that it is

a religion well reasoned, founded upon cool judgment, and even grounded in the best science and philosophy at our command.

Neither am I alone in cherishing it. The most independent minds, the most rational and the most stalwart, of modern times have believed and do believe as I do, and stand upon the same sure ground. Bergson, the French philosopher, though not a Christian, declares, "I firmly believe that we maintain our individuality after death." Even Tyndall, scientist and rationalist, says "that only in dull, depressing moments does this faith lose its hold on the heart." John Fiske, the American philosopher utters in his creed: "Belief in immortality is a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." Is it necessary to cite the German poet Goethe, or the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, or the English poets of the Victorian era, Tennyson and Browning, or the greatest men of science of today, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Keith, Michael Pupin, Robert Millikan? The thinkers are legion who bear me company in a reasoned and reasonable faith that death is but an incident, only life's most beautiful adventure.

When, then, shall the time ever come that we shall adopt the logic of our faith and cease to mourn so bitterly and almost hopelessly when

those whom we love hie away upon their beautiful journey? When shall we ever take our Master at his word and bid goodbye to those we love as if we stood upon the pier while they sailed away, flower garlanded, upon a voyage into summer seas; grieving, yes, grieving for that we may not go with them, but not inconsolably grieving as if we should never see them any more. It is a lack of faith to grieve like that. Our black funerals are a barbarous survival of pagan hopelessness. I would change them if I could to ceremonials beautiful and placid and congratulatory to the voyagers. I would send our departed ones away with singing and happy tears. I would break up much of the undertakers' business, banish the lugubrious coffins, let what remains of the departing travelers lie clothed in white, flowing garments on soft cushions symbolic of peace and rest and a happy journey; and instead of putting them down in cold ground, I would commit them to pure flame which should rapidly transmute their material particles into something new and strange.

Where did he go and where shall we go? I do not know and I do not care. I don't think we shall go to any place, be bounded by any local habitation or restricted to any material sphere. Spirit with spirit shall meet; we shall see as we

have never seen before; we shall remember, for memory is the very essence of personality; we shall communicate not with tongue and gesture, but heart to heart and soul to soul. We shall post over land and ocean without rest upon his errands, as Milton says. We shall have work to do, and play, and unending liberty. Sailors shall sail if they want to; carpenters shall carve; singers shall sing, and painters paint, and thinkers think. Players shall perform their dramas with mountains and clouds for scenery, and forests unending for their setting, and blazing stars for their footlights. All shall play as children with a lightness of heart and an exuberance that no untoward incidents may ever mar. Let your imagination play as it will, it cannot go astray, for the logic of the premises of Jesus sweeps upward and outward through the blue, the ether, and all whirling stars of light. No rhetoric and no music, no poetry and no eloquence can set it forth "for it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what shall be."

This, and nothing less, I take to be the triumphant lesson of Calvary and the empty tomb. I believe in the power of an endless life. I reach that belief not from the intimations of immortality, though they are many; but I reach it from the word of Christ, the life and the death of

Christ, the resurrection and the unending power of Christ. From that belief flows freedom from fear — fear of death and of separation; flows willingness to depart at any time, sure that the separation, like man's life, is but a breath; flows freedom from bitter grief, from heart-eating and hopeless misery, from the dread and fear of graveyards and gravestones; flows anticipation that the best is yet to be, and that a day is not distant when these frail decrepit forms shall slough off and give place to celestial bodies, fair and free as Ariel. All this is not ecstasy, but firm and reasoned faith, the faith that comes to us across the centuries out of the mysterious greyness of that first Easter dawn.

A Gospel of Beauty

Surely, if ever there is a time to speak the good news of beauty, it is when the world is white with May. The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us in this blue and golden month, when the crocuses, the violets, and the dandelions spring from the deadness of winter; the robins, the thrushes, and the mocking-birds come back to build in the trees in our yards; and white cumulus clouds float across the sky. Then what about the autumn? One time Mark Twain was asked "What is the most beautiful thing you ever saw in all your life, and in all the world?" Quick as a flash he replied, "Missouri, in October!"

I can never forget the day I read for the first time, with gulps and gasps of joy, Vachel Lindsay's account of his adventures while tramping over these middle western states to preach the gospel of beauty, a delicate and sensitive Greek spirit clothed in a rugged American middle-western form. What a hair-brained thing it was, one would at first say, for a young tramp to do, to go from farm to farm and ranch to ranch, poking his little printed message into the hands of stolid working people, which called upon them to

lift up their eyes and see the beauty all about them, to let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon them. Of course he got more from them than they got from him; he saw the gentleness and the sweetness, the courage and the endurance, in their humble lives; he saw even the tragic beauty in their sorrows and their crimes; and yet who knows how many times he stirred and awakened the latent sensitiveness that lies in every human soul to the wonder and the glory which our God has spread all around us.

There was once a religion of beauty, a religion whose sole intent and purpose was to awaken and to answer those emotions deep down in human hearts which respond to the beautiful. The ancient Greeks builded their faith on the beauty about them and the beauty that they could create. The blue skies, the golden sunlit air, and the still deeper blue of the Aegean Sea remain to this day, but this is about all that is left to the outward eye of the glory that was Greece. And yet who of us can say how deeply the Greek spirit has penetrated even into modern times? We know that Greek thought quickly laid hold upon the gospel of Jesus, poured into it the ancient content of its love for beauty, harmony, and order, and created the fourth gospel, commonly called

St. John's gospel, which to many minds is the loveliest of the four. Who can measure, then, the obligation that we Christians owe to the aesthetic sense of the Greeks, which with them amounted to religion, and which with us is certainly an element in religion.

There stands the Acropolis at Athens, that high hill looking down over all those ancient lands and seas, that mountain dedicated to beauty, the very essence and monument of that old-time faith, now in ruins, but still surpassingly lovely even in ruins, and still to a degree of which we are scarcely aware dominating the philosophy, the art, the literature, and even the worship of the world. I can never forget the awe and the bated breath with which for the first time I ascended that hill, the eagerness with which my eyes turned to the Propyleum, the Erectheum, and finally the greatest and most beautiful of them all, the Parthenon, the temple of the virgin goddess, Pallas Athene. After a time the guide said to me, "You have been here before?" No, I had never been there before in the flesh, but in imagination a thousand times. Every part of that sacred hill I had known almost from boyhood — I, a middle-western boy, brought up in the heart of America, two thousand years after the glory that was Greece had begun to fade. How, then, can any-

body measure the influence of her gospel of beauty upon our own message of good news?

All beauty appeals to emotion, and emotion is certainly an element in religion. I shall not here venture upon a definition of religion, as I do not think it needful; for it is one of those things that all of us know but have difficulty in defining, and certainly in agreeing upon. It is sufficient to say that emotion affects all our thinking, and certainly by no means the least, our religious thinking. Worship is at best emotion. Our conclusions of all kinds are affected, even unconsciously, by our profound and earnest desires. We easily believe what we wish to believe, and there is no doubt at all of the existence in every one of us of a will to believe. If this is true, then it inevitably follows that desires and emotions may be consciously directed into the best channels, may be influenced by everything true, beautiful and good that is around us. It is not a futile thing, therefore, to proclaim a gospel of beauty and to try to direct people's eyes toward all the beauty, to which their attention may never have turned, that surrounds them. In other words, religion is at least in part made up of the appreciation of the beautiful in the world, in human life, and in the evident plans of adjustment between these two.

It is nothing less than a religious service to open men's eyes to the natural beauty of the Lord our God about us. Doubtless everyone, even the farm hand or the section laborer, is influenced, whether he knows it or not, by the wonder of a May morning, of a clear sunrise in spring, of the misty green veil that grows on the trees, and the thickening carpet of grass that overspreads the earth. He cannot but be aware of the rainbow that spans a cloud after a spring shower. He cannot but be moved by the mystic moonlight that nickel-plates the landscape, even to the piles of wornout railroad ties, or the tin cans and the refuse of lodging house back yards and alleys. Our hearts leap up when we behold a rainbow in the sky; and the pale moons fill us with memory, yearning, and dimly remembered emotions of years long gone by, if nothing else. There is so much besides these that is beautiful: the storm, the rain, the lightning and the thunder, the barren plains, arid deserts, rocky slopes and mesas. To these, men's attention has often to be called. There are not many, at least not many hereabouts, who see the beauty in the rain and love it. On the contrary, I think our people in the middle west fear rain more than anything else in nature. Rain holds people in this country in their places, under shelter, when nothing else

would, not heat, not cold, not ice and snow. I have seen people get up and hurry out of an audience at the mere threat of rain, for fear a few drops might fall on them before they could get home. There is no such deterrent to church attendance in the middle west of America as rain. Our people are cat-like in their fear of getting their feet or their coats wet.

One night I heard M. S. Rice, of Detroit, lecture at the Methodist general conference on "The Skylark of Methodism," which means Bishop Quayle. One of the things he brought out was the great love which the bishop had for all weathers and all seasons. He loved the rain, and he loved to get wringing wet in the rain. The highest point in Dr. Rice's address was that in which he described a walk with his dear friend, the Skylark, by a little stream in northern Michigan. He told of the ceaseless flow of conversation that poured from the lips of the bishop about the beauties all round them, how finally they sat on a grassy bank and dangled their legs above the mud, black and slimy, that projected from the shore out to the water, how the bishop finally exclaimed, "Isn't that beautiful mud?" Then like a child, he cried, "Let's get down into it," and taking off his shoes and stockings he began paddling about in the ooze, while Dr. Rice rolled

laughing on the grass. At last the bishop took up a handful of the mud and held it close under his friend's face, saying, "Look at it. Isn't it beautiful mud? This mud is the symbol of the utmost sacrifice. It is the attrition from the rocks of thousands of ages, the dead and decayed forms of millions of plants that have died to give new and fresh life to the world." Then he plucked a pond lily and held it high while he turned his face up to it and exclaimed, "O, you beautiful thing. You beautiful, beautiful thing. You have grown out of infinite sacrifice into your wonderful beauty." Beautiful mud!

Yes, beauty is all round us in the commonest things of life. This is what Vachel Lindsay preached to the farmers and the section hands. This is what Maeterlinck tells us in his "Blue Bird," that our happiness is to be found right at home. This is what Lowell sings in his "Vision of Sir Launfal," that the Holy Grail, the Christ himself, the secret of life, is to be found in one's own walls and at one's own gate. This is what Henry Van Dyke has put into "The Other Wise Man," that the real Messiah is to be found not in following some star into far distances, but by lending a hand of help to some one close beside us on the road. A thousand others have rung the changes on this message, chiefest among them

Jesus himself, that the longed-for beauty, the pearl of great price, is close at hand; the treasure is buried in our own home field; the lost coin of peace and happiness and contentment is to be picked up as we sweep the corners in our own little homes. "Daily with souls that cringe and plot, we Sinais climb and know it not." We need not travel into far places and by untrodden ways to find beauty. It lies all round us. We have only to get eyes and look.

Beauty resides, too, in human lives. How little we appreciate one another! To so many of us, the human race is for the most part ugly. That is because we allow ugliness to reign within ourselves. When we cherish contempt for humanity, be assured that we are to that extent ourselves contemptible. I know that there are many unlovely traits in human beings; but after all the greatest beauty in all this world is to be found right there, in people, in human nature. Sometimes the very unloveliness changes into beauty, results in beauty, is transformed into beauty, even as the summer landscape is glorified by the drama and the tragedy of storms. The Greek dramatists transmuted what we might call the stark and ugly struggles of mankind against fate into lines of nobility and deathless grandeur. We may think that all romance and all drama is dead in

this machine-made and machine-governed age of ours; but still the mighty flood of human life flowing across our century, even standardized, cut and patterned by machines, goes grandly, even if at times tragically, between its banks to the distant sea of the unknown.

Roughness, coldness, hardness, indifference to the feelings of others, willingness to inflict pain — these are ugly in human nature and are still often prevalent; the gospel of beauty would pull them up by the roots, or better still would change them, make them over again and take the essential virility which lies at the root even of these noxious growths and burbank them into something new and beautiful. No matter how rough the man or how cold the woman, there is something that will pierce beneath this crust to a native gentleness and kindness and sweetness underneath. And these are beautiful, these are the natural tendencies of human nature, if not spoiled and twisted by circumstances or environment.

These, too, are cultivable; we may set about definitely to plant and foster them. The soft answer, the return of good for evil, the unremitting good taste and beauty of courtesy, will break down the most stubborn and self-centered roughness and coldness. Then will grow beauty for

ashes; and the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us.

Cowardice is ugly. Yielding and falling before the blows of fate is unlovely. And how wonderfully beautiful is their opposite, courage, perseverance, determination! How constantly are we astonished at the manifestations of these qualities in the commonest men and women whom we see! For the most part, humanity is wonderful in that it is unconquerable. Human beings meet with discouragements, losses, limitations and embarrassments, that would take the heart out of any other creature, even Simba, the lord of the jungles. These fliers who have been facing death, and even meeting death, with such glorious abandon over polar regions, in the frozen air, in enveloping fogs and storms, how they have thrilled us! Yet those same qualities are to be found amongst the millions who, in little shops and offices or in obscure homes or hospitals, face pain and bereavement and death itself with a stoicism and even an illumination inspiring in its tragic grandeur. I am constantly amazed at and delighted with the courage and endurance, unnoted for the most part, of the humblest and obscurest people. I take off my hat to them all the time. And so, doubtless, do you, if you know them and their difficulties, and their heroism.

Cutting and malignant words, which spring from envious and bitter hearts, how vicious and ugly these are and how out of keeping with the native beauty of the human heart. The destructive word, the gossip that always thinks evil instead of good, the unconscious envy which would pull down any other life struggling to be fair and strong and beautiful, this is a foul shape of ugliness that still is to be found. Just recently in this, our city, I have witnessed an attempt to destroy the name and influence of one of the most stately and beautiful and serviceable women in American public life. Of course the attempt fails. Ugliness cannot endure; only beauty can live. And whoever says, "With every word a reputation dies," misses the truth a thousand miles. Out of England comes this little bit of verse by Harold Monro, revealing that what is true of this city is just as true of London:

"In every street, this noisy town of ours
Has stealthy whispering watchers walking round,
Recording all our movements, every sound,
Hissing and shuffling, and they may have found
Today my name: tomorrow they'll find yours."

Over against the evil and vicious words, however, think how many more kind words, admiring words, beautiful words, words of good taste are spoken. Ugliness is rare after all, and beauty even in speech is far more plentiful.

In short, the whole gospel of beauty, so far as humanity is concerned, resolves itself into a gospel of love, love for people in general, by and large, all sorts and conditions. Any sense of personal superiority, any and all egoism that is exclusive of an appreciation of the beauty in all other human lives, offends against good taste, aestheticism, the sense and the love of beauty. The good news of Jesus, what he called the kingdom of God, the realm and the reign of God in the hearts of men never enjoined an impossible or unreasonable thing; and its very first injunction is love not only of God but of one another. We can love men, even men we have never seen; we can so shape our lives and even our very thoughts and emotions as to regard with admiration the struggles of distant peoples; yes, and with affection, too. This is the highest gospel of beauty; and this is the highest beauty of the gospel.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, so that we may be conscious of it, the glory of the day, the sky and the trees and the grass,

the consciousness of beauty all about that the Greeks sought for, that Israel prayed for, and that Jesus embodied. Even our machine age need not take it from us. We may still maintain gentleness and kindness in place of rough and cold self-assertion. There is still — yes, and even more — call for courage and endurance to supplant cowardice and yielding. There is all the more demand for good words and the best interpretation of one another instead of bitter and envious and cutting words. There is all the more need for a cosmopolitan love of humanity everywhere and of every kind, which is after all the secret of the well-being and the up-going of the race. In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea. No life so calmly and supremely harmonious and beautiful as his.

Pilgrims of the Night

Jesus, like many others, compares life to a journey. The simile is inevitable, and has even grown trite in our thinking and in all literature. Our Master calls one philosophy of life a strait and narrow way, and another one a broad and easy way. Repeatedly the Bible likens life to the journey of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, or to the flight of Jacob from his brother Esau, when he lay down to sleep on the mountain top at Bethel, his rest a stone. Shakespeare puts it into the mouth of Ophelia to speak of the primrose path of dalliance, and of Hamlet to muse about that bourne from which no traveler returns. One could quote for an hour, from the poets and literary artists, such allusions to the way of life, the dusty roads, the rocky roads, the houses by the side of the road, the inns and the oases for nightly rest. In my boyhood, on every marble-topped center table, in every farmhouse in the land, rested "Pilgrim's Progress" and a huge subscription volume called "The Royal Path of Life." There is no such royal path; but the comparison of life to a road entered into every child's heart who saw that book. Perfectly natural,

then, comes Jesus' figure of speech when he talks to his disciples of "the way" he must travel, and they must travel, too. Indeed, the Christian path soon came to be known as "The Way" and "This Way."

This journey is obligatory upon us all. There is no escaping from it, no turning into some other way, no traveling by some other means than those which the Great Planner has arranged for each of us. Simon Peter, the last night before the crucifixion, wanted to travel with Jesus by his way, and wanted to go right now; but the Master gently replied, "You cannot follow me now. But you shall follow me. They will bind you, and lead you by a road you do not want to go." Peter was like all of us. Fate binds us, circumstances bind us, and we have to travel by our own road whether we want to go or not. We travel in all sorts of ways, by foot, by horse, by train, by automobile, by airplanes through the sky; and every one of these paths, whether on the earth or over it, by land or by sea, is like the path of life.

Furthermore, we are pilgrims in the night, because we cannot see far ahead, and because we do not know whither our road is tending. All round us is the complicated mystery of life — so strange it is, so unexpected, so inexplicable, so

crowded with doubts and fears. We cannot explain it to each other, try as we will. Now it is lonely, and now it is brightened with companionship. Now the road is dark with sadness and now it is radiant with joy. Now it is heavy with fatigue and we think we cannot drag one foot after another; and now it is exuberant, exhilarating, and our feet are dancing like the feet of the very young. Now it seems to us that there is no plan nor purpose in it all, that our footsteps circle and wind and crisscross, with no set goal in sight; and now and again we dimly perceive that there is a plan and a guide for each one of our little lives. At one time it seems to us that we shall never find rest, or that when we find it, it will be only oblivion, a sleep that knows no wakening. Truly, we are pilgrims of mystery and the night, but

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee.
Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night."

This long, long road of life — for brief as it is, it seems long to us — is sometimes lonely and sometimes filled with happy comradeships on the way. It is lonely because of this very mystery which is the essence of life. It is a marvelous thing, nothing less than a miracle, that we can communicate at all with each other, send ideas across the space between mind and mind and heart and heart. But when we have done our best either to reveal ourselves or to pierce the shell of our nearest and dearest, it is after all somewhat like hallooing in the dark or in the dim and shadowed light of a mysterious moon, so hedged in are we by the walls of flesh which render communication difficult and imperfect. Indeed, the more thoughts we have, the lonelier we grow and the more difficult it is to impart them one to another. The profounder our reflection upon the absolutes, the origins, the elements of it all, the less able are we to tell one another about the gropings of the tentacles of our minds. This is the reason why the great philosophers and thinkers speak so obscurely and speak only to the few. We cannot think others' thoughts for them; we cannot live others' lives in their behalf; we can tread nobody else's road except our own. How pathetic is the struggle of parents, for example, to lift their children over the rough spots, across the marshes and the

streams that are in the way. This can never be done, and there is no use eating our hearts out about it, wasting our emotions and suffering unduly on their account. The best any of us can do is to give a little road information, as we have traveled, it may be, a part of that path ourselves; and yet, when all is said and done, we have never traveled exactly that path; nobody has. A pathetic thing about life is this loneliness, and yet a challenging and inspiring thing, a call to the pioneer spirit in us all.

On the other hand, there is much of happy comradeship along the way. No need for anybody to be without it. So many human beings there are in the world, and in so many ways just like ourselves. Each one of us is inclined to think that nobody else ever felt as he feels; nobody else was ever in just the fix that he is in, nobody else ever had just the thoughts, good or evil — or what convention has taught us to believe good and evil — as he has had. But this is a grave mistake; we are all very much alike. We are mistakenly particular about our companionships. We insist that we are lonely unless we have contacts with people of just our age, just our environment, just our training and education and tastes. If we would only believe in humanity, we should find anybody companionable; and there would be no snobbishness of any sort left

in us at all. Black or white, red or brown or yellow, there are gentlemen travelers and gentlemen adventurers all along the roads of life, fit companions for kings and princes of the mind and heart.

Leading out of Jerusalem is a five-mile road that goes to a little ruined village. It used to be known as Emmaus. Two men once walked along that road, mystified, discouraged, pilgrims of the night; when a stranger joined them and, like true men of the world, they welcomed him and at their journey's end invited him into the inn to break bread with them. In the twilight of their journey they did not know him, but they knew him in the breaking of the bread; and when he left, they said to each other in wonder and joy and awe, "Did not our hearts burn within us as we talked with him by the way?" Many a time, when I thought deep loneliness was on me as I traveled, I have talked with some stranger — and so have you — and my heart has burned within me, and one like to the Son of Man has emerged from the mists to be my comrade on the way. Such surprises put brilliance into life and lend beauty to the road.

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea."

Sometimes the road is hard with sadness and sorrow and pain. There is harsh weather to endure, for everyone of us; there are mountains to climb, swollen rivers to cross. There are forks in the road where companions, long loved, must separate from us and go a different way. Another inevitable pathos in human life. Some of our dear friends arrive at the journey's end ahead of us, enter into the wayside inn or the oasis and stay there, to leave us toiling on in the night. This is hard for us to understand, and too often we break our hearts about it. And yet again, the most of the journey — yes, for every one of us if we will but regard it so — is one of joyous adventure, experimentation, pioneering. The very hardness of the path, its steepness, its unbridged streams, are a challenge to the best that is in us; and the very stretching of the muscles and the nerves of mind and spirit and will gives a resiliency to the undertaking. As Ulysses says, in Tennyson's poem:

"My purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die . . .
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Sometimes, too, unutterable fatigue weighs us down. We move on mechanically, dragging one

slow foot after another, like soldiers, sleeping as we march on horse or on foot. We make up our minds that we cannot go on, the journey is too much for us, we want to give it up and lie down by the roadside. Somehow, none the less, we get our second breath, we break through the wall of fatigue. We find new energy flowing in from we don't know where, the scene changes, pleasant pastures lie ahead, still waters flow, we take new heart of hope, and it seems as if a new presence had joined us to give zest and life to the adventure. Grim determination grows in our souls until by and by it becomes actual exhilaration. Here is the touch of the Almighty hand upon our shoulders; here is the mysterious power that surrounds us all the time, flowing unconsciously into us to give us new resolution; here is the Son of Man unseen and unobserved, it may be, walking beside us, bringing us an access of endurance and courage and hope and joy.

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea."

One thing is dawning upon us with increasing certainty, I think, in this our so-called scientific age, and that is that this journey has a definite purpose and a certain end. I know at times we feel that it is apparently all so aimless, so chaotic,

so involved, that we cannot make heads or tails of it. It does often seem like a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing. So frustrated do we think ourselves, so fruitless our best efforts, so empty and vain our highest endeavor that it is no wonder we allow ourselves to slip into a slough of despond about the aimlessness of the whole thing; but this is not the real spirit of our bright time. The best thinkers of our day are convinced that all this shining universe of light, and even this little dark world of ours, has behind it a glorious purpose, and that every individual life crawling between heaven and earth is going somewhere and is definitely on the road. We may not know where we are going, but undoubtedly we are on the way.

What that purpose is cannot easily be put into words, any more than he who made the purpose can easily be defined. The more you talk about God, the deeper the water you get into; and the more you talk about the end and aim of life, the less are you able to put it into satisfactory terms. Of this much, for myself, I am convinced, that the purpose of life is not to have an easy and happy time of it. Happiness may come, and usually does come, when the life is directed toward the highest and best destination.

I know that a good case can be made for the philosophy that to be happy is the supreme end and aim of human existence. Nevertheless, the greatest teachers we have had and the sum total of human experience will scarcely bear out this attitude of mind. Other things being equal, we should be as happy as we can, consistently with our obligations, and preëminently our obligation is to grow; but few of advanced years and wide experience would venture the assumption that happiness is our chief aim in life. Rough old Carlyle used to say, "All the happiness a brave man ought to ask in this world is happiness enough to get his work done." I think that expresses the true philosophy. Happiness is a by-product of achievement, of growth, of development, of guarded and expanded personality.

I think, then, that the goal is a city set upon a very high hill, toward which we travel either singing or crying as we go; that the journey is the important thing and not the distant city; that the very toil, the very crying, and the very singing, the very loneliness and the very companionship are themselves the end and aim of life. Growth, development, the expansion of muscle and sinew, courage and strength, faith in what we are about, belief in life, expression of ourselves in every possible way so that all the time

we get bigger and have more to express — this is the best I can do in trying to put into words the purpose of it all. I hear so many say, "I am not happy, in my work, in my family, in my environment." Well, what of it? Happiness is not the purpose. Traveling is the purpose. We ought to be happy traveling. If we are not, something is wrong inside of us or outside, and something, too, that ought to be and, by God's grace, can be set right. Hunger there must be on the road, fatigue and stone bruises and loneliness and sadness. Things do not forever go right on any journey; how can we hope for them always to go right on this big journey of ours, the adventurous journey of life? When we are threading forests, crossing rivers, climbing mountains, how can we expect to avoid mishaps here and there, delays, obstacles, heat and cold, hunger and weariness. We only draw our belts tighter, put plasters over stone bruises, do our best to make ourselves as comfortable as may be, but none the less we drive ahead. That is life. And if we go in that spirit, we shall hear voices when we need them most, calling us on, encouraging and inspiriting us.

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea."

There is an end to the journey, too. At last we arrive. "Journeys end in lovers' meetings," says Shakespeare. He is right — all are lovers. It may be what we call short, or it may seem to us long, but finally we come to the end of the way. We reach rest. We arrive at the terminus of the visible road. We shall be ready when the time comes; almost every one who reaches the end of the journey is ready for his rest. Never fear. But it is not the end of life. It is only the end of what we are accustomed to call life. It is really the end of the preparatory journey, the end of the road to Emmaus. If the great Master taught us anything in most explicit terms, it was that this little journey we call life, so brief at longest, is but the beginning of a fairer, smoother, easier, and happier road, which goes on and on through pleasant paths and knows no end. None of us can see so far ahead. How much better that we should not, else we might grow impatient and voluntarily refuse to travel on over this preliminary terrain. Jesus would not reveal to us what that future journey is likely to be. Wise in all points, he must have been wise in this. He gave only hints about his Father's palace with its many apartments, its rest and its peace. As Maurice Maeterlinck has said, "Whatever it is, it must be good." Of this much I am well assured, that

if we are to travel on stoutly on this present journey, we must keep faith burning strong and bright in our hearts all the time, that when we arrive we shall find all and more than we had hoped to find. I say " we must " advisedly, because belief is so much the outgrowth of determination and emotion. All the time we are believing what we most want to believe; and it seems to me legitimate that we should voluntarily keep alive in us the faith that the journey's end is to be beautiful and fair; not an oblivion, but a continued growth and expansion of what we here call this present life. A welcome awaits us.

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The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea."

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